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BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER!

Behold Your Mother!

The Blessed Virgin's Goodness and Greatness

BY

MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

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"ST. JOSEPH OF JESUS AND MARY," ETC.

Ecce Mater tua.—John xix., 29.

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To St. John the Evangelist

The three words that form the title of this book were first spoken to you from the Cross, O dear and glorious Saint! Our Divine Redeemer was then dying for our sake. In a few moments He was to breathe His last breath and leave this mortal life for ever; and in those last moments He bequeathed His Blessed Mother to your care. But you, dear Saint, represented us all in that solemn scene, and Mary was given to us also as our Mother. To each of us our Lord says still, "Behold your Mother." Oh, may it be said of us as of you: "And from that hour the disciple took her as his own." Let us take her as our own. Let us look up to her as a mother, confide in her, love her, fly to her in all our troubles, try to please her in every way that we can, try to avoid all that displeases her, and to live in the manner that befits the children of such a Mother. Help us, O sweet Apostle of Love, to feel as you felt towards the Mother of Jesus after Jesus had said to you with His dying breath, "Behold thy Mother!"

Note to Second Edition.

The first edition of this book, consisting of a thousand copies, has been exhausted in three months. This is due most of all to its beautiful theme, about which the pious faithful can never hear enough. Catholic journals and reviews on both sides of the Atlantic have given the little volume a generous welcome. It is now sent forth again in the hope of helping some more souls to turn with greater love and confidence to our Mother who is in Heaven.

MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

Feast of Our Lady's Nativity,
September 8th, 1909.

Preface

I HAVE had the happiness of putting into print many devout prayers and meditations in prose and verse about the Holy Eucharist, Our Blessed Lady, St. Joseph, and many saints. The small volumes of verse were generally followed before long by books of prose on the same themes. Thus "Emmanuel, a Book of Eucharistic Verses," was followed by "Moments before the Tabernacle," "At Home near the Altar," "Close to the Altar Rails," and "Communion Day"; and "St. Joseph's Anthology" was followed by "St. Joseph of Jesus and Mary." Strange to say, this has not yet been the case with regard to the Blessed Virgin. "Madonna" appeared in 1880; and no corresponding book of prose has since been offered in homage to the Queen of Heaven. I dare to supply this omission now.

"Another book about the Blessed Virgin!" Yes, although far better books exist already in abundance; but this new one may fall under eyes that would never read those other better books, and God may perhaps use these simple pages to inspire some hearts with the filial love that is due to our Mother in Heaven. When Raphael was at work one day on the famous Sistine picture of the Blessed Virgin,

Marc Antonio, entering his studio, exclaimed: "*Cospetto*, another Madonna!" "Yes," the great Artist gravely replied. "If all painters spent all their time trying to depict our Blessed Lady, they could never exhaust all her beauty."

It may be well to add here that my first two books of religious verse mentioned above—"Emmanuel" and "Madonna"—have, after running through several editions, been out of print for many years, their contents being included in "Vespers and Compline, a Soggarth's Sacred Verses."

Several of the devotional essays in this new volume have appeared in *The Ave Maria*.

May this book help the readers and the writer of it to make their own of that hymn of Father Faber's, which Cardinal Newman considered the highest effort of his pious Muse:

> Mother of Mercy! day by day
> My love of thee grows more and more.

And may that other word of the author of *All for Jesus* be fulfilled in us at the end: "How it would sweeten death if, when we came to die, we could feel that God had allowed us to increase in one single heart the love of our Blessed Lady!"

St. Francis Xavier's, Dublin,
February 11th, 1909.
First Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

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BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER!

The Three Mothers.

"Behold Your Mother!" In these pages it is easy to guess what Mother is before our minds when we say, "Behold your Mother!" even if we did not remember the time and the place in which these three words were spoken. It was when our Divine Redeemer was dying for us on His hard deathbed of the Cross—when He was turning away from all creatures, turning finally to His Heavenly Father, into whose hands He was about to commend His spirit. His Blessed Mother, of course, was of all creatures the last in His thoughts; and at the very last He confided her to the care of the Disciple whom He specially loved.

But the Church has always held that, at that solemn moment, Saint John stood there for us all, represented us all; and so to each of us that tender legacy was bequeathed, that precious

trust was committed. To each of us was it said, "Behold thy Mother! And from that hour the Disciple took her to his own." * And from that hour every true disciple of Christ, every true Christian, has taken as his own the Immaculate Mother of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Yes, Mary is our Mother. And yet she is not our only mother. But can any person have more mothers than one? I will venture to let this question remind me of a visit that I paid fifty years ago to an old graveyard near Windsor—Stoke Poges—which claims to be the scene of a famous "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." At any rate, the poet Gray buried his mother there; and I remember reading on her tombstone the pathetic words in which he described her as "the careful and tender mother of many children, only one of whom had the misfortune to survive her." It is not this, however, that has made me think of him now, but something in one of his letters: "We may have many friends, but only one mother—a truth," he adds, "which I did not discover till too late."

You whose mothers are still living, beware of discovering this truth too late. Discover it now, in time, while you are still able to profit by it,

* St. John xix. 27.

still able to behave as it must prompt you to behave toward the chief human instrument of God's bounty and love. A good mother is nothing less than *that*. Out of all earthly ties and relationships, motherhood stands alone; amongst the purest and deepest affections of the human heart, there is no rival for the patience, the self-sacrifice, the meek heroism of a mother's love. "We may have many friends, but only one mother."

Nevertheless, as I was going on to say a moment ago, in another true sense, we have each of us more mothers than one. There are three who share that sacred title—three toward whom, in different ways, we are bound to feel filial love, to show filial duty and reverence.

There is, first, the mother to whom we have just referred—that daughter of Eve, that child of Mary, that woman of whom our Almighty Creator deigned to make use in creating us, in drawing us out of nothingness, in making us members of His human race in this visible world. We have already emphasised almost sufficiently for our present purpose *that* mother's dignity, her transcendent claims upon her child's devotion. Mothers are the best embodiment of the Creator's omnipotent goodness, the principal makers and moulders of the child's character, the child's destiny.

"What France needs," said Napoleon, "is good mothers." She needs them now more than ever; and, please God, in spite of sad appearances to the contrary, there are in that beautiful but afflicted land good mothers by the thousand and thousand, who will help to save France at this sinister crisis, and to keep her Catholic still.

But our own dear country—what good mothers must have reigned in the homesteads of Ireland, the poorest even and the humblest, to make the purity of the Irish maiden a proverb—nay, a portent—for the unsympathising world outside! What good mothers they must have been, what faith and courage they must have had—the mothers who helped to keep the Irish race so true to the Catholic Faith through all the perils and temptations of the dark penal days! So it is still, and so it will ever be.

Of all the graces of my lot, I prize o'er every other
This, that my Maker gave to me an Irish Catholic mother.

That first mother, our mother according to the flesh, lost no time in sharing her responsibility with another mother, sending us (before she was strong enough to take us) to the baptismal font to be made children of the Catholic Church. The Church is the mother of souls. She brought us forth into the life of the spirit; she nourishes

us with her holy sacraments, and guards us by her laws and discipline, and all her sacred influences that are unceasingly at work. We, too, can say, as St. Teresa said over and over when she was dying, "After all, O Lord, I am a child of the Church!"

But there is a third mother to whom our spiritual mother, the Holy Catholic Church, taught us soon to raise our eyes, pointing upward to the Queen of Heaven, and saying to us, "Behold your Mother!" At her inspiration, too, the poor mortal mother who bore us was eager to train our childish lips to utter their first "Hail Mary." The "Hail Mary" alone is a sufficient note of the Church. One of the plainest signs that mark out the Catholic Church as the one true Church of Christ is her attitude toward the Mother of Christ.

This closest union that must needs be between Mother and Son, between Divine Son and Immaculate Mother, has seldom been urged more strongly than by an American writer * who, nevertheless, does not belong to the visible body of the Church. "There is," he says, "no lie forged in hell more in conflict with the will of God, as expressed in Scripture and Catholic tradition, than the Protestant idea that they

* In *The Lamp*, an Episcopalian religious journal published at Garrison, N.Y.

honour Jesus best who most ignore the existence of His Mother. 'Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder'; and there is no divorce more horrible as a flagrant violation of the Fiat of Almighty God than the divorce made by the Protestant Reformers between Christ and the Blessed Virgin."

This emphatic recognition of the place that the Blessed Virgin necessarily holds in the kingdom of her Son astonishes us in one outside the Church, but it is the merest matter of course for us who are within. God forbid that we could dare to be jealous or suspicious or cold-hearted or disloyal toward the Immaculate Queen of Heaven! Our two mothers on earth have instructed us too well in our duty toward our Heavenly Mother to allow of so terrible a mistake.

As for any mistake in the more generous direction—as for the possibility of excess in the homage paid to our Blessed Lady—we have no fear: there is not the slightest danger. The simplest and most ignorant peasant woman knows that Jesus is God and that Mary is a woman like herself, though blessed, indeed, amongst women. The infinite distance that separates created mortality from divine eternity—the most ignorant peasant woman knows this as well as the most accomplished of her sex, such as that illustrious Russian convert, Madame Swetchine,

who exercised a powerful apostolate of Christian culture in the highest social circle of Paris some sixty or seventy years ago.

I have brought in rather abruptly the name of this holy woman for the purpose of recalling the terms in which she wished to be described in her epitaph, as one who believed, who loved, who prayed. We, too, must believe and love and pray; and each of these great acts might seem, by a sort of appropriation, to belong to one of those three mothers on whose claims we are meditating. We must love the human mother who brought us into this world; we must believe in the divine mission of our holy mother the Church, who conducts us safely through the dangers of this world; and we must pray constantly to her whom we hope, when this world is over, to salute as our Mother and our Queen in heaven for ever.

This application to our triple subject is merely fanciful and arbitrary; but our three mothers were certainly linked together in the heart of that little Protestant girl of whom I heard many years since. "At present," she said, "I must go to the Protestant church on Sundays with my father. But, when I grow up, I will become a Catholic; for I want to belong to that Church that will make me pray to the Blessed Virgin, and pray for my mother who is gone."

We have not, like that good child, to make our way with difficulty into the arms of our mother the Church: she folded us in her arms from our birth. Thanks be to God, we are loving children of the holy Catholic Church! May we always prove ourselves true and faithful children of that mother, animated by her spirit, obeying her commands, and using her graces and privileges, till a happy death has placed us in security before the tribunal of the Son of Mary! May Jesus, in His mercy and His justice, be able to say to us again from His judgment-seat, and afterward from His heavenly throne, what He has said to us from the Cross! May He smile upon us, and look at His Blessed Mother, and then turn to us and say once more, "Behold your Mother!"

The Immaculate Heart of Mary.

"HOLINESS befits Thy house, O Lord." These last words of the ninety-second psalm, which is repeated in the Divine Office almost every day of the year, refer in their primary meaning to the temple of God in Jerusalem; but in a higher mystic sense they are applicable to the Blessed Virgin Mary. For Mary is pre-eminently the house of God. We are all of us indeed God's temples; but in a special and transcendent sense our Blessed Lady is the tabernacle of God with man, the shrine wherein God's glory dwelt. In the Incarnation, the Divinity wedded itself to our humanity, and this union was accomplished in the womb of Mary Immaculate. To no closer relations with the Infinite Creator could any creature possibly be raised than this relationship of Mother to the Man God. Not by a mere figure or metaphor, not by adoption or any external title, but in literal truth and reality, Mary is Mother of the Incarnate God of heaven and earth, for whom, according to His own word, a body was fitted—*corpus aptasti mihi*—out of her substance, and who drew from her veins that

blood which was to wash away the sins of the whole world.

But her own soul, more perfectly than all others, was the first to be bathed in that cleansing tide. As fountains, mindful of their source, will strive to spring upward to the height from which they have come, even thus (says the great French bishop Bossuet) the river of the Precious Blood has sent its divine efficacy back to its source, the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Immaculate Conception, therefore, is no limitation set to the conquests of the Precious Blood, but it is its earliest and completest and most glorious triumph. It is no encroachment on the empire bought by the blood of the Lamb that, by promise and acceptance, was slain from the beginning of the world. It is no exception to the universality of Christ's "plenteous redemption"; it is but the first and fairest and richest of the fruits of that redemption. For the mystery of the Incarnation almost began to be virtually accomplished at the moment of the Immaculate Conception—the first instant that a human heart was beating which from its earliest throb was unutterably dear to the Son of God as the Heart of His Mother.

From its very first throb. Never for one instant did the serpent triumph over this Second Eve, this true Mother of all the living. Never for one instant was she alien to God and enslaved

to sin. God could not suffer that even for a single instant, even for the swiftest lightning flash of time, His all-pure eyes should be offended with the presence of sin of any kind, or any form, in that soul for which He had waited so long, the object of His divine predilection from eternity. No, it beseemed the dignity of such a Son and of such a Mother that from the first instant of her being, the soul of the Blessed Virgin should be enriched and beautified with all graces, and preserved from the original stain by the special privilege of God's omnipotent mercy, through the merits of her Divine Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. "Fear not, Esther: this law of death is not for thee but for all others" (Esther xv. 13).

Almighty God kept the Heart of Mary immaculate, pure and stainless from the very first, because He had chosen that Hebrew maiden to be the Mother of His Son; and He chose her to be the Mother of His Son, out of His own infinite bounty indeed, but also because from out the abysses of His infinite wisdom He foresaw that Mary by her free use of His graces would co-operate with Him in keeping her heart such that His poor human creatures, her fellow-creatures, would at all times be able to cry to her, as we are crying now, "Most pure Heart of Mary, pray for us!"

The Heart of the Immaculate Mother is, of

course, of all hearts the most like to the Heart of her Divine Son, to whom even we at His own bidding pray: "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like to Thine." Mary herself could have prayed that prayer during her mortal life. Nay, she *did* pray it, and her prayer was granted. At each successive moment of her years on earth the Heart of Mary grew more and more like to the Heart of Jesus. Out of all the fallen race of man she alone—we have said this before, but it is a delight to say it over and over—she alone, from the first throb of her heart, gave full heed to that entreaty of her Creator, "Child, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii. 26). She alone, from the first throb of her heart, obeyed perfectly that first and greatest commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." She gave her whole heart to God, she loved Him with her whole heart. She never for one moment tarnished ever so slightly the sheen of heaven on her soul; and this perfect purity of heart enabled God to throw upon this *speculum justitiæ*, this beautiful and unspotted mirror, all the brightness of His divine grace and sanctity, as far as creature could reflect them, so that His eye might at all times, and ere time began, rest with complacency upon the Heart of Mary, before and during and after her mortal life on earth, and now this moment in

the immortal life of heaven, and on and on for ever.

The first feeling that the contemplation of this mystery ought to excite in our hearts is an unselfish joy. We ought to rejoice with God that there is one perfect trophy of His redeeming grace; one utter and absolute triumph over sin and hell; one human soul, in which the Enemy of God may never for one moment have any part so as to be able to boast that the Mother of Our Lord, the Daughter of the Eternal Father, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, had ever been in any sense his slave; that there should be one soul at least on which the eye of God, for whom there is no past or future, might rest for ever with delight as perfectly pure and spotless.

But let us think of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, not now as the joy and glory of her Maker and Redeemer, but rather as the joy and glory of our Blessed Mother herself. And for Mary herself, Queen of Heaven and Mother of God, must not her joy of joys and her glory of glories be this perfect sinlessness—the possession, the secure and inalienable and everlasting possession, of this priceless treasure of a pure heart—purer than Alpine snows, purer than the stars, purer than the light of day? May we not dare to say that Mary's share of the happiness of heaven—and what a share *that* must be!—is derived less

from the glorious crown that sparkles on her brow than from the pure heart that beats within her breast? All others that have gone up from this earth to fill the vacant thrones of heaven have been at some time, in some degree, under the ban of God's displeasure; to her alone has He at all times said: "Thou art all fair, O my beloved, and spot there is not in thee!"

We ourselves, sinners though we be, can perceive dimly from afar how rapturous must be the glory and the ecstasy of this absolute freedom from sin. To have sinned even once is for ever to have sinned. God Himself in His almighty mercy can not undo *that*. To have been for even the briefest term under the blight of sin is for ever to have been in time past under that deadly blight. God can forgive but He can not forget. Blessed be His mercy and His Power, that He has preserved one from the sad need of forgiveness—one on whom for all eternity He shall be able to look without being (in our human language) *reminded* of bygone miseries, from which only His mercy could have snatched her! To be thus reminded of His mercies serves indeed to endear us poor sinners to Him; but a greater stretch of His mercy saved her who was to be the Mother of His Son from being ever plunged into that horrible sea of ruin wherein all other human creatures are well-nigh lost. For this greater

mercy shown to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and for all the other special and singular graces reserved for her, let *our* souls also "magnify the Lord," and let our spirits rejoice with hers in God, her Saviour.

With this joy, however, is there not mingled a certain lurking jealousy, a selfish fear and sadness, as if all these great things which the Almighty has done for His Handmaid raised her higher and higher above us and removed her farther out of our sight? How can she, the pure and sinless Virgin, look with love and interest on us, who are so sinful? But she can. The tenderest and most compassionate Heart of all is His who is immaculate and impeccable, not by grace only but by nature; and next to the Heart of Jesus the kindest and tenderest and most merciful of hearts is the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In one of the exquisitely beautiful "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," which was John Henry Newman's first publication after his reception into the Church, these words occur: "It is the boast of the Catholic religion that it has the gift of making the young heart chaste; and why is this," he asks, "but because she gives us Jesus for our food and Mary for our nursing Mother?" Not by the young heart alone are these purifying influences needed. Hearts may remain youthful

to the end in many things, good as well as evil; and hearts both young and old require to be screened against the glare of temptation and against the bewitchment of vanity—screened by the very thought of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by her prayers and patronage, and by the holy moonlight of her smile.

Yes, the mere thought of Mary's Immaculate Heart helps her poor children down below on earth to keep their hearts pure amidst the temptations and allurements of this life. Abiding habitually in her sweet and gentle presence, we learn of her to be pure of heart, as we learn of her Divine Son to be meek and humble of heart. There are, thank God, many even on earth whose presence thus purifies the very air they breathe and makes vile, earthly thoughts impossible while *they* are near. So in a transcendent degree with the Mother of Purity, Her of the Immaculate Heart, "the mother of fair love, of fear, of knowledge and of holy hope."

There was a good French boy many years ago, Albert de Dainville, who received as a birthday present a handsomely illustrated volume. His mother and he, turning over the pages, found that many of the pictures were unfit for Christian eyes, and they determined to destroy the book, gorgeous as was its exterior. That night after they had retired to their rooms, the lady heard

her son calling her to his bedside. "Those horrid pictures are haunting me still, mother. Sit here beside me and let me hold you by the hand till I fall asleep." Every careful and pious mother, like this good French lady, resembles in her measure the Mother who was bequeathed to us all from the Cross; and so this simple incident has its counterpart in the life of many a child of Mary; and we are all of us—young and old, men and women, married and single—we are all of us children of Mary. Just in the same manner when assailed by temptation—evil thoughts or evil memories, or evil desires or dangerous company, or any other of the perils of life—we must fly to the Most Pure Heart of Mary, we must summon our Blessed Mother to our aid, imploring her to stay with us and not to let us part from her till we are safe, till all danger is past; and *that* will not be till life itself is past, till Mary has watched over us to the end, and we (with the names of Jesus and Mary and Joseph on our lips) have fallen asleep in peace to wake up with joy at the feet of our Immaculate Mother in heaven.

Mater Dei, Mater Mea.

Non vos derelinquam orphanos (John xiv. 18). These four words, which become six in English—"I will not leave you orphans"—are taken from what might almost be called the divinest portion of the Word of God, the farewell discourse of our Blessed Redeemer at the Last Supper.

In more ways than one our Lord kept this promise of not leaving us orphans. When the Church turns His promise into a prayer and says in the antiphon of the second *Magnificat* of the Ascension, "O King of glory . . . do not leave us orphans but send to us the Spirit of truth, the promised one of the Father"—she indicates one of these ways; and our Lord Himself indicates another when, after saying the words, He adds at once, *Veniam ad vos iterum:* "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you again." We know how it is that He comes to us; we know by what device of His omnipotent love He has contrived to come to us after leaving us—to withdraw His visible and glorious presence, and yet to abide corporally amongst us still.

But there is another way in which our Divine

Redeemer has saved us from being orphans; "I will not leave you orphans." Jesus made this promise the night before He suffered; and He fulfilled it in the very depth of His sufferings on the morrow—when He said the next day, *Ecce Mater tua*, "Behold thy Mother."

But even without that tender legacy, in receiving which—in taking the Blessed Mother of Jesus as his own—St. John the Beloved Disciple represented us all: how could we be orphans while we are able to say, *Pater noster*, "Our Father who art in Heaven"? Before we go on to think of our Mother who is in Heaven, let us delay for a moment to consider those earlier words of our Lord; let the *Our Father* here also, as it does almost everywhere, precede the *Hail Mary*.

We are allowed to repeat familiarly, quickly, without much reflection and in a blessed spirit of routine, almost mechanically, the divine prayer which first fell from the lips of Jesus Christ one day that His disciples gathered round Him, saying, "Lord, teach us to pray." Repeated in this manner, the syllables follow one another as a mere matter of course. But when we now and again pause a little longer and meditate upon all the full significance of the Lord's Prayer, we cannot help being struck by the very first word that we are taught to address to God by Him

who is God Himself and who best knows the way to His Father's heart.

That first word is *Pater*, "Father;" and the more deeply we ponder on that word and think by whom it is spoken and to whom it is spoken when it is spoken by us to God—the more we reflect on what is meant by "Father" and on all the feelings and associations that cling round the name of Father—the more thoroughly do we enter into the mind of the Church when every day in the Mass she prefaces that prayer with the words, *audemus dicere:* "we dare to say *Our Father*." Warned (she says) by salutary precepts and formed by the training of God Himself—only after being thus admonished and thus taught, only then can we dare to say, "Our Father who art in Heaven." But we *must* dare it. It is the boldest stretch of daring, the utmost audacity of human ambition to dare—we wretched worms of the earth—to dare to address by the name of Father the eternal, infinite, almighty, and all-perfect God, saying to Him, "Our Father who art in heaven." Yes, we must *dare* it; for from that heaven the voice of the Eternal Father has been heard, saying, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him;" and we must hearken to Him and obey Him, even when He says, "Thus shall ye pray: *Our Father who art in heaven.*"

This name of Father, on which the great God deigns (to use too human a phrase)—deigns to pride Himself, is but another name for God's love ; that mysterious love which nothing can explain but which itself explains everything ; that mystery of mysteries which alone makes all other mysteries conceivable. The hardest act of faith by far is that to which St. John the Apostle of Love exhorts us by his example : *Credidimus charitati quam Deus habet in nobis* (1 John iv. 16)—" We have believed in the charity that God hath to us." We believe, as our Lord Himself said before, that (John iii. 16) " God has so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son " to be our Brother and so made Himself our Father. Therefore it is that Jesus who knows His own heart and ours, puts as the first word on our lips when we move them in prayer to God, " Our Father who art in Heaven ; " and in the great parable of the Prodigal Son He represents God as yearning for His erring creature like a father yearning for his lost child ; and of the Seven Words upon the Cross the first and the last begin with " Father."

There is an admirable little Italian book of devotional discourses in which this parable is followed at once by a meditation on our Lady's intercession ; and the author* makes the transition from one subject to the other by suggesting that

* Biamonti, a secular priest.

the poor Prodigal would have come back more speedily and with less misgiving if there had been a mother waiting lonely for him at home and eager to plead for him with his father. But this thought is unjust to the more than motherly tenderness of Him who kept watch for the Prodigal, who saw him from afar, and ran to meet him and fell upon his neck. A mother's heart was yearning for him at home. Our heavenly Father is our God and our all; and, as Jesus once stretched out His arms to His disciples and expressed His affection towards them by that wonderful ascending climax of love, "Behold My brothers and My sisters and My mother!"—even so we in turn may stretch out our arms to Him, and claim from Him with confidence in all its fulness all the love that He can place for us in the hearts that are bound to us by these strongest and tenderest of human ties.

> They bade me call Thee *Father*, Lord!
> Sweet was the freedom deemed.
> And yet more like a *Mother's* ways
> Thy quiet mercies seemed.*

Yes, He is father and mother and all—all the tenderness of all human hearts united together would be only a drop and not even a drop out of the infinite ocean of God's love, less than one

* Faber's "God of my Childhood."

little foam-flake that hardly wets for a moment one tiny pebble on the beach compared with all the wide seas and unfathomable oceans.

But now God's love has become incarnate in Jesus our Lord and Saviour ; and as (to repeat our Lord's own words again) " God has so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son," so that divine Son has so loved the world as to give His own Mother to be our Mother also : that, as " we have the spirit of the adoption of sons whereby we cry *Abba!* Father ! "—so, too, our hearts may be drawn heavenward with the cry, " Hail, Mary, our Mother ! " Thus, having the Son, Himself Divine and Coequal, as our advocate with the Father, we have also an advocate with the Son, a creature like ourselves and yet so unlike to us, one who is to be for us, as she is for Him, too, all that is contained in the sacred name of Mother.

We must not try, it would be vain for us to try, to sound the depths of meaning in that word—the eloquence, the pathos, the poetry, of a mother's love. We must not try, and we need not ; for do we not all

> . . . feel that, in the heavens above,
> The angels, whispering to one another,
> Know not among their burning words of love
> A more endearing name than that of Mother ? *

Is not a mother's love our very synonym for

* Edgar Allen Poe to his wife's mother.

true and unselfish tenderness, for a love that can survive toils and pains and wrongs and absence and neglect and forgetfulness and a broken heart? A man who does not show much feeling in his writings—though one of them is a famous "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"—has left this saying in one of his letters: "We may have many friends, but only one mother—a truth [he adds] which I did not discover till too late."

Sixty years ago a gifted and generous-hearted Irishman* wrote: "In a climate soft as a mother's smile, on a soil fruitful as God's love, the Irish peasant mourns"—another instance of the constant linking together of mother's smile and God's love, of God and Mother. Nay, God Almighty Himself, when He would place His love for His poor human creatures far beyond all that mere created hearts can contain, takes His example of unsurpassable human love which His own love alone surpasses, and surpasses infinitely—He takes this extreme and uttermost example from the heart of a mother, and asks, as it were defiantly, "Can a mother forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, still will not I forget *thee*" (Isaias xlix.). Yes, the sublime dignity of true and worthy motherhood is the most vivid image of the unwearying Providence of God.

* Thomas Davis.

But love demands love. *Quis tam amantem non redamet?* If a mother's love be such, what ought to be a son's return of love? The great Commandment which the Divine Lawgiver has placed first in the second table of the Law, first among the precepts that regard our fellow-creatures—that least necessary of all the Commandments merely adds a new sanction to what is an unconquerable instinct of our human nature. One does not need to be a Christian to feel this—one hardly needs to be a man. Those who never heard the Fourth Commandment, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, proclaimed amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai and confirmed anew by the Son of Mary—even poor benighted pagans have nevertheless done deeds and spoken words of filial piety which strike us the more from the contrast with their stern heathen surroundings. For instance, we are told in the history of Greece how the warrior, Epaminondas, was asked what was the circumstance in his whole career for which he deemed himself most fortunate, and how he answered that it was his having won the battle of Leuctra for his country while his father and mother were still alive to rejoice in his glory. A still more famous heathen warrior, having as a mere youth overrun the entire East, and made many mighty kings his vassals, was in the height of his triumph informed that his mother, Olympia, had conspired against

him at home in Macedon. Perdiccas brought to the youthful Emperor proofs of all the charges against his mother. "And does not Perdiccas know," asked Alexander, "that one tear from my mother would blot out all these accusations?"

Best known, however, of all such heathen illustrations of a mother's power—best known because the mightiest dramatic genius that ever thrilled the world's heart has told the story, and made us see it at its climax: how Coriolanus, after winning brilliant victories for his native Rome, had fallen a victim to the jealousy of his enemies and been cast forth in disgrace, an outlaw; how he then joined his country's foes and led *them*, too, to victory, and how he next turned his arms against Rome herself. The terrified city sends out embassy after embassy to the invader, the highest senators and his former friends, entreating him to withdraw his forces, and offering the most abject terms of submission. In vain. Coriolanus is inexorable. He rejects all their overtures with scorn, and continues his triumphal march of vengeance. At last his aged mother, Volumnia,* is conducted to his camp, and casts herself in tears at his feet. At once the stern conqueror yields to his mother's prayers, forgoes his brilliant revenge, and saves Rome from destruction at the

* So called in Shakespeare. Father Felix, S.J., calls her Veturia. His wife's name was Virgilia.

cost of his own. "O mother, thou hast saved Rome, but thou hast destroyed thy son." Soon after Coriolanus was slain, a victim to the disappointed rage of the Volscians.

If these are pages from heathen story when woman was degraded and so many of the finer instincts and feelings of the human heart were killed or deadened, what must needs be a mother's place in a true Christian heart under that purer and nobler dispensation established by the Son of Mary, wherein the Madonna, in whose arms Jesus lay as a child, has become the ideal of redeemed and exalted womanhood? Above all, what must Mary's place be in the Heart of Jesus, and in the hearts of all who aspire to be His brothers, children of His Mother?

For Mary is mother of Jesus. She is His true Mother, and He is her true Son; and all that the truest and most loving of sons can feel towards the best of mothers—that and infinitely more Jesus feels towards Mary; while Mary in her turn loves Jesus as her Son with a natural love beyond what all mothers' hearts can hold, and she loves Him as God with a supernatural love beyond the love of saint or seraph or of all saints and seraphim combined.

But though the love of Jesus filled her immaculate Heart, there is room in that heart for us also whom Jesus has associated with Himself in

her maternal love. As He said, "I ascend to My Father and to your Father"—as He bade us, in praying to Almighty God, to begin by saying, "Our Father who art in heaven": so from His throne in heaven, as from His cross on earth, He looks from her to us and says, "Behold your Mother," and with a mother's name He gives to her a mother's heart for us all.

How do we, her children, feel towards her in return? Let us examine how we stand on this score, set right what is amiss, and supply what is wanting. Let us turn in earnest to the Blessed Virgin Mary, ever Immaculate; let us look up to her, think of her, read about her, say her Rosary well, pray to her with confidence as Queen of Heaven and Mother of God, and yet our own loving and patient mother also. Let us remind her of what she never forgets, that, like Queen Esther, she has been raised up so high, not for her own sake only, but for ours, for the sake of her people. And when the King says to her, as Solomon said to Bethsabee, "Mother, ask! I may not turn away thy face," or as Assuerus said to his Queen, "What is thy petition, Esther? Though thou shouldst ask half of my kingdom, I will grant it to thee"—our Blessed Mother will exercise on behalf of us her poor children her *supplex omnipotentia*, her suppliant omnipotence, her all-powerful supplication, the almighty inter-

cession of maternal love. "These, my Son, are also the children of my love. As Thou on Calvary, looking at me with those eyes which were then closing in death, didst say to them, 'Behold your Mother!'—I now say to Thee in turn: Behold Thy brethren, children of Thy Mother. Look on them with pity, look on them with love, for they love me."

The Presentation of Our Lady.

The Rosary of the Blessed Virgin might well be called the Rosary of Jesus, if that name were not claimed by another beautiful exercise, which our pious grandmothers knew off by heart, but which, I fear, has, like the Jesus Psalter, dropped out of use. Each of the fifteen decades of the Rosary places before our eyes a scene in which Our Lord is the central figure; even the first two and the last two are not exceptions. Thus, the Assumption and the Coronation of our Blessed Lady make us look on Jesus. To the former we apply the text, "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?" In the latter it is by her Divine Son that the Blessed Virgin is crowned in heaven with the brightest diadem of glory. As Jesus is the centre of every "Hail Mary," so He is the centre of every mystery of the Rosary.

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple is not one of these mysteries of the Rosary; for Jesus did not come till the Archangel Gabriel was sent, some years later, to that holy child when she had reached womanhood. Many

pious writers are of opinion that the child Mary was thus consecrated specially to God when three years old; but Benedict XIV., most learned of Popes, says we cannot rely on the authenticity of a certain fragment attributed to Evodius, who was Bishop of Antioch, and lived soon after the time of the Apostles, in which the leading dates of the Blessed Virgin's life are distributed thus: "When three years old, she was presented in the Temple; and there, near the Holy of Holies, she spent eleven years. Then by the hands of the priests she was delivered into Joseph's guardianship. And when she had passed four months with him she received that joyful message from the Angel. When fifteen years old, she brought forth the Light of the World on the twenty-fifth day of the month of December."

Although St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John of Damascus, and St. Andrew of Crete repeat these circumstances, they can not be accepted as certain. Especially as regards the date of the Presentation, it is significant that, whereas formerly the prayer of the feast began in this manner, *Deus qui sanctam tuam genitricem, templum Sancti Spiritus, post triennium in templo præsentari voluisti . . .* ("O God, who didst will that Thy Holy Mother, the temple of the Holy Ghost, should after three years be presented in the Temple"), important changes were made in this prayer as it stands in

the liturgy of the Church. It is no longer addressed to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the play on the word "temple" disappears; and, above all, the *triennium* is omitted. These words were expunged by the Sovereign Pontiff, Sixtus V.; and the prayer now runs thus:

Deus, qui beatam Mariam semper virginem, Spiritus Sancti habitaculum, hodierna die in templo præsentari voluisti, præsta, quæsumus, ut ejus intercessione in templo gloriæ tuæ præsentari mereamur. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.

"O God, who didst will that Blessed Mary ever-virgin, the dwelling of the Holy Ghost, should to-day be presented in the Temple, grant, we beseech Thee, that, through her intercession, we may merit to be presented in the temple of Thy glory. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Whatever doubts, however, may rest upon the particular circumstances connected with it, the general fact of the Presentation, as the last and greatest of the Benedicts has told us, can not be called in question: it is guaranteed by a sure and constant tradition, and by the celebration of the feast on the 21st of November. That celebration began in the Eastern Church many centuries before the Western Church adopted it. Amongst those who laboured to secure for this festival its proper place in our calendar, Benedict XIV. gives the chief credit to Father Francis

Torrianus, or Torres, one of the Jesuit theologians at the Council of Trent, who, perhaps as a recompense, died on the very day of the Presentation, November 21, 1584. It was a good day for him to appear before the judgment-seat of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Son.

Father Fabius Ambrose Spinola, S.J., whose meditations have been translated from their rich Italian into Latin, German, French, and Spanish, but never into English, asks in one of his meditations on this amiable mystery: "Why, O Lord, such haste? Is she not already all Thy own? The house in which she dwells, is it not holy?" This question might be answered by the lines of a French poet, in a somewhat different meaning:

Le ciel aime les fleurs et pour les cueillir belles,
Ne fait point de retards.

God loves young flowers, and loves them fresh and fair,
And so He culls them in the morning air.

In another meditation, Father Spinola answers his own question in words borrowed from St. Ignatius' favourite, Father Peter Ribadeneira, whom I will quote from a fine old English translation:

"It was fitting that the blessed child who was to be the Mother of God should not delay to

consecrate her soul and body to the service of her Spouse ; for as early fruit, fresh and newly gathered from the tree and with its bloom upon it, is more gustful and pleasing than the withered fruit, handled and fetched out of the market, so the service which is done Our Lord in our tender years is more grateful to Him than that which is offered to Him in old age ; although God is so good that He receives the late sacrifices also, and pays with great liberality and bountifulness those who go to labour in His vineyard at the setting of the sun."

The Italian Jesuit followed his Spanish brother very closely, as may be seen by comparing the two passages in the originals.

God's love for humility, secrecy, obscurity, and self-annihilation on the part of His most favoured creatures, is another point which must strike us in glancing at this most hidden part of a life that was hidden from the beginning till the end—hidden always in God, though not yet "hidden with Christ in God." St. Thomas Aquinas is said to have had a special devotion to the hiddenness of God ; and God Himself has been well said by the baker-poet of Nimes, Reboul, to love "the silence of good things"—*le silence des bonnes choses.*

I once noticed in a seedman's circular a passage about spring-flowering bulbs, of which I kept

a copy for its fancied bearing on the present subject; though indeed it rather illustrates the expediency of the hidden life as a preparation for public life:

"It is well to keep them (when cultivated in glasses) in a dark closet, where there is just sufficient warmth to excite them to growth, by which they will be induced to throw out roots freely while the leaves are at rest—a very important consideration in their management; for, should their leaves be excited into growth (which is quickly done by light and warmth) before they have a sufficiency of roots to keep up a proper supply of nourishment, they will become weakly, and their flowering imperfect. When the roots are sufficiently thrown out, they may be gradually removed to more light and heat; their leaves and flowers will then be rapidly developed."

I may join with this passage some words of Father Richard Strange, an English Jesuit of the first half of the seventeenth century. What he says about the parents of St. Thomas of Hereford may be applied to Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Blessed Virgin:

"They resolved to place this precious treasure which God had given them in a safe retreat; as nature, or rather the Author of nature, teaches the little pearls, when they are soft and tender in the shell, to retire under shady and hollow

rocks; being otherwise not only exposed to violence of waves and weather, but also subject to change colour and to be sun-burned if they float in the open sea."

This bit of natural history about the little pearls hiding themselves for fear of being sun-burned is hardly as trustworthy as my seedman's advice about spring-flowering bulbs. But, in serious truth, God, as Father Strange has just reminded us, is the Author of nature as well as of grace, and the operations of grace often follow the analogy of the operations of nature. And that treatment of the spring-flowering bulbs and that conduct of the little pearls might well suggest useful hints for the management of our spiritual and intellectual life.

That portion of our Blessed Lady's life to which the thought of her Presentation turns our hearts and minds has within the last half century become the object of special devotion, under the title of *Mater Admirabilis*. A religious of the Sacred Heart painted on the wall of one of the corridors of their convent of the Trinità de' Monti in Rome a fresco representing the Blessed Virgin at work, such as she may have been during her stay in the Temple. This holy picture has been more appropriately called "The Virgin of the Temple," and also *Madonnina del Giglio* ("The Little Madonna of the Lily"), from the

lily which bends toward the young Maiden as she sits at her distaff, with her book open beside her. It is said that the Abbess Makrina, when an exile from Minsk, where the nuns had been cruelly treated by the Russians, gave it its present title, by which it is designated in the Papal grant of indulgences and in other official documents. Pope Pius IX. visited it and blessed it, and ever since this shrine has been a place of pilgrimage.

The first handbook of the devotion, by Father Alfred Monnin, who was also the first biographer of the Curé d'Ars, Blessed John Baptist Vianney, was entitled "Mater Admirabilis; or, the First Fifteen Years of Mary Immaculate." Now a hundred years before Madame Perdrau obeyed the happy inspiration to portray the "Verginella del Tempio" on the walls of the convent of the Trinità de' Monti, Benedict XIV. quoted with approval a grave and erudite writer, Baillet, as saying that the feast of the Presentation was instituted by the Church *ut honor habeatur innocentiæ morum quæ inter infantiam et Annuntiationem in Beata Maria Virgine exsiluit*, "in order that due honour might be paid to the innocence of life which shone forth in the Blessed Virgin Mary between her infancy and the Annunciation"—namely, during that very portion of Our Lady's life on earth on which the devotion

to the *Mater Admirabilis* strives to fasten the special attention of the faithful.

Nano Nagle placed the first Irish-born Order of nuns under the shelter of this sweet and amiable name—the Presentation of Our Lady. Dominicanesses, Carmelites, and Poor Clares were in Ireland already in spite of all the rigour of the Penal Laws; and Nano Nagle herself had first introduced the Ursulines. But she next founded the first Order of Irish birth; and, as these Sisters were to instruct the children of the poor and humble, and to guard their piety and purity, they were fitly assigned a name which would remind them of the corresponding period in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, while she was being brought up within the sacred precincts by the holy women who were consecrated to the service of the Temple.

These thoughts, and the holy associations that for various reasons cling round the title of *Mater Admirabilis*, will, I trust, help some of us to make use habitually of this devout invocation, "O Mother Most Admirable, pray for me!"

Lady Day.

(The Feast of the Annunciation.)

"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women." These words, so blessedly familiar to our lips since our lips learned to utter articulate sounds, were first spoken by the Archangel Gabriel in that supreme crisis of the world's history, which we commemorate on the twenty-fifth of March. It is the Archangel's part of the first Hail Mary of all—first out of the countless millions of times that that angelical salutation has been and will be addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I have called the moment of the Annunciation the supreme crisis in the history of the human race. Books have been written about the "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," and certain events are sometimes singled out as turning-points in the fortunes of various countries. But the one real crisis, the central epoch in the history of fallen man, was that moment in which the Angel of the Annunciation stood waiting for the consent of the Blessed Virgin. "The

consent of Mary to the Incarnation of the Son of God," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "was necessary in order that the Redemption of Mankind should spring from the consent of a woman to the proposition of an angel coming to salute her from God, as the ruin of mankind had arisen from the consent given by a woman to the suggestion of an evil angel."

The mystery, therefore, commemorated on the twenty-fifth of this month was very much more than merely the Annunciation, the announcement of the dignity conferred on Mary. It was in some sort almost a negotiation; it was a solemn embassy from the Most High God to His lowly Handmaid. The almighty and all-merciful God (as the great Pope, St. Leo, says finely, in the first lesson of the second nocturn of Matins for the Feast)—"the almighty and all-merciful God, whose nature is goodness, whose will is power, and whose work is mercy," in His infinite power and wisdom knows how to reconcile the absolute supremacy of His own Divine Will with the perfect freedom of the service which He accepts from His poor human creatures; and here was the greatest act of service that any mere creature has ever performed, or could ever perform.

But we are not going to consider the Annunciation as another name for the Incarnation.

The feast, indeed, which commemorates that mystery, though it is no longer a feast of obligation except in Ireland, and perhaps a few other places, might well put forward solid claims to the highest rank in the hierarchy of the Church's festivals, with Christmas and Easter and Pentecost;* for in the first instant that a Heart began to beat which was at once a human heart and the Heart of God, in that same instant the world was virtually redeemed. One sigh of that Heart, one tear shed by Jesus, would have been adequate atonement for the sins of a thousand fallen worlds. But let us only worship with silent awe this crowning mystery of God's love and power, while we dwell for a little, not on God's part in it, but on the Archangel's part and that of the Blessed Virgin Mary herself. His part was to say, "*Ave, gratia plena*," and hers was to answer, "*Fiat mihi*."

Yes, the feast of the Annunciation is the feast of the Hail Mary. The "Hail Mary" is by itself a sufficient note of the true Church of God. If we could imagine the Archangel Gabriel sent back to this earth, so far ignorant as to require such marks and tokens to distinguish the Christian

* It would be pre-eminently entitled to an octave; but as Ash Wednesday varies from February 4th to March 10th, March 25th, Lady Day, must fall between the second week of Lent at the earliest and Holy Week at the latest. There are no octaves during Lent.

Church from all pretenders, the "Hail Mary" would be proof enough for him, it would be easy for him to discover those who use his words, who follow his example, who adopt his attitude towards the Blessed Mother of our Redeemer, and to pronounce that those who act thus are the true children of the Church which the Son of Mary established upon earth.

Nothing but ignorance, deception, and a terrible mistake could make any sincere, well-disposed Christian unwilling to say the "Hail Mary"; for, as the catechism taught us long ago, the Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth made the first part of it, and the Church made the last.

We began by repeating the Archangel's portion of this brief but mighty prayer, "Hail, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed are thou amongst women." There he paused. He did not add, "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb." It was too soon to say this. This was to be supplied soon after in the amiable mystery of the Visitation by the mother of the Precursor. When the Archangel contributed his quota to the "Hail Mary," the Incarnation was not yet accomplished. He who was to come had not yet come, but was waiting for the Fiat of the lowly Virgin, who in her turn waited till God's designs were sufficiently revealed to her, and she understood that the Divine Maternity would

not destroy, but enhance and elevate, her immaculate virginity. Then, and not till then, did she see clearly what God wanted from her, and at once she bowed her head and said, "Be it done to me according to Thy word:" *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.*

By this Fiat a greater prodigy was accomplished than that which followed the original fiat of creation. In the beginning God said, "*Fiat lux*": "'Let light be made,' and light was made." And again, "He spoke, and all things were made," says the Royal Psalmist. But if we may dare to compare the infinite works of God, one with another, the Redemption was a greater exercise of His power than the Creation. The Church makes this assertion every day in the Mass. Just after the *Offertory* the priest reminds God that He founded the human race in a marvellous manner, but that He has redeemed it in a manner yet more marvellous. *Mirabiliter condidisti, et mirabilius reformasti.* That more marvellous reformation, that "copious redemption," began to be accomplished when the Blessed Virgin by her Fiat fixed the moment of the coming of Him who was to come, the moment when "the Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us."

We must not, however, imagine that the Blessed Virgin's Fiat was merely an acceptance

of the unspeakable dignity of Mother of God. The Annunciation is called the first of the five Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary; but the joy was not unmingled with fear and pain. The Divine Son of that Immaculate Maiden was to be the Man of Sorrows, and she herself was to be the *Mater Dolorosa*. For her, too, all the sufferings of life lay between her then and her heavenly crown. The consent of the Blessed Virgin was not so much required for the Incarnation in itself as for the Incarnation as including Redemption. The Incarnation itself would have brought to the mother of the Incarnate Word dignity, greatness, exaltation, glory, and joy, and these not purchased by any sacrifice; and there was no need that God should ask the consent of a creature to the reception of a favour which was to carry with it no pain or suffering. But it is far otherwise with Redemption, which was, indeed, to bring glory and honour to the Mother of the Redeemer, but glory and honour to be bought by an unspeakable painful sacrifice which was to change all her life into one long martyrdom and to make her the Queen of Martyrs. Queen of Martyrs indeed she is, not only because she is enthroned in dignity high above the martyrs, but also and chiefly because the pangs of her martyrdom far surpassed the pangs of all the martyrs combined. When life is over, and our

crown is won, how little will seem all the cares and labours and sufferings that shall have helped to gain for us that crown! But it is very different while those trials are still before us, or pressing heavily upon us. So for the glorious title of Mother of God—what was it to bring to the Blessed Virgin during all the years of her life but an inconceivably painful martyrdom, a crucifixion of heart multiplied as many times as there are souls to be redeemed or sins to be expiated by the Precious Blood of her Son? Her Fiat—which drew the God of heaven to rest in the bosom of her nothingness, as the Fiat of God had drawn out of nothingness all things that are—that "Be it done to me" was as it were a permission to her Creator and Lord not to heap His favours upon her, but to lay upon her the heaviest cross ever borne, except by Him who died upon the cross. And this cross of her's she embraced not only at the foot of her Son's cross on Calvary by the consent which she then gave to His Passion and Death; nor only when Simeon thirty years earlier had told her of the sword which was to pierce her soul and which she bore in her soul ever after; but she had already embraced her cross beforehand from that solemn moment on which this meditation fixes our thoughts. "In that moment of the Incarnation," says Father Jeanjacquot, S.J., "she understood

all that Redemption was to cost the Redeemer, and consequently the Mother of the Redeemer; for it befitted the infinite wisdom and goodness of God to give her that perfect knowledge from that very moment, in order that she might lose nothing of the merit of her self-immolation in this first moment of her consent." Thus the awful shadow of Calvary was upon her from the first; for from the first she knew that to be the Mother of Jesus was to have a mother's share in the lifelong sorrows of Jesus and in His most bitter death.

These are some of the thoughts that in one form or another, more or less consciously, are brought up before our minds, not only by the great feast of the Annunciation, but by the devout repetition, and especially now and then by the slower and more earnest repetition, of that little prayer which hails our Blessed Lady as full of grace—those first words which the God of truth and wisdom, who reads the heart, who knows all the hearts that He has made, bade His Archangel address to His meek and humble Handmaid. Full of grace, full of that which alone attracts the eye of God, which alone delights the heart of God, and to each degree of which a degree of everlasting glory corresponds. Full of grace already, even then; and she had not yet yielded that consent which gave her a mother's

share in the joys and sorrows of our Saviour; she had not yet borne in her womb the Giver of all grace, had not yet brought Him forth and been a mother to Him, and guarded and cherished Him through all the holy years of Nazareth; and she had not yet stood beside the cross, and had not yet resigned her Son to the tomb first, and afterwards to Heaven, while she herself waited on through the long years of prayer and longing and resignation between His Ascension and her Assumption. If she was such at the beginning, what was she at the end when she had reached that fulness of grace which the heart of Jesus was content should be the portion of His Blessed Mother for ever in the kingdom of His glory? What is she now in her place in heaven, such as St. Bernard and St. Alphonsus and many another have tried to describe for us, such as she was in the pious meditations of St. Stanislaus, St. Aloysius, St. John Berchmans, and all the saints and sinners that in the days of their pilgrimage have raised their hearts to her as their Queen and their Mother, even as we must try to do. Hail, full of grace! Now, indeed, "the Lord is with thee," and thou art with Him in His Kingdom, close to Him for ever. Pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death.

The Child and the Mother.

"And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary His Mother" (Matt. ii. 11). Where else could they expect to find Him? They had come a long way in search of Him, those Magi, those princes and wise men from the far East; and this was the goal of their weary and perilous pilgrimage—a little Infant nestling in His young Mother's arms. The sign given a short time before to the shepherds by the Angel of the Lord might well have been expressed in these terms also. "And this shall be a sign to you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger" (Luke ii. 12). That was immediately after His birth; but we may be sure that He was not left long in that rude cradle; and a little later on, if the star that guided the Magi could have spoken like the Angel, it might have said to them: "And this shall be a sign to you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and folded in His Mother's arms—you shall find the Child with Mary His Mother."

And so it happens, certainly not by chance or

heedlessly, but with a deep and pathetic significance, that this same simple phrase is repeated five times in this second chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew. After the Oriental pilgrims had departed, an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother and fly into Egypt." "And Joseph arose and took the Child and His Mother." And afterwards, when Herod was dead, an Angel of the Lord recalled them from exile, saying to Joseph again the self same words: "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother:" and the Evangelist tells us finally that "Joseph arose and took the Child and His Mother and came into the land of Israel."

Mother and Child! Child and Mother! "Whom God hath joined let no man sunder." This emphatically is the union between the Immaculate Mother and the Child Divine put forward on the front page of the first of the Gospels. There and everywhere "you shall find the Child with His Mother." And where else, we may ask again, where else could we expect to find Him?

And so it has been ever since. Not only at Bethlehem and Nazareth at the beginning of our Lord's hidden life, but at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee at the beginning of His public life, "the Mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus

also was invited" ; and at the end upon Calvary, during that death of shame which was at once followed by the beginning of His glorious life, "there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother" ; and a little after, between the Ascension of the Redeemer and the descent of the Paraclete, it is written of the Infant Church, "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus."

Thus are Jesus and Mary together always. "You will find the Child with His Mother." So has it been ever since on earth, and so shall it be until the end on earth and then for ever in the world without end in heaven. And, if from this end which has no end, we go back to the beginning which has no beginning, we shall find the place of the Virgin Mother in the Christian dispensation clearly foreshadowed in type and prophecy. Sending back your thoughts far beyond the cradle of Bethlehem, back to the cradle of humanity itself—there on the threshold of history "you shall find the Child with His Mother"—the same Child and the same Mother, the Woman and her Seed. Nay, if we dared, we might go still further back and mount still higher up ; for in the decree of the Incarnation of the Son of God *She* was necessarily included through whom God the Son was to become incarnate—*She* was necessarily included through whom He

who said "*Behold I come*" was in the fulness of time to come; and in this sense the Church accommodates to our Blessed Lady passages of Holy Writ which apply directly to the uncreated Wisdom of God.

The Blessed Virgin's place in the New Dispensation is indeed the most obvious of Christian truths; and it is not easy to let our minds rest on it, even in a passing way, without feeling ourselves moved to renew in our hearts our vows of loving and faithful allegiance to the Church in which alone we find the Child with His Mother. The "Hail Mary" is a sufficient sign of the true Church of Christ.

Some thirty or forty years ago a poor lad who had entered the Limerick workhouse as a Protestant made the proper formal application to have his creed register changed. He was brought before the Board of Guardians, many, of them influential Protestants, and questioned as to the motives for changing his religion. "Why do you want to be a Catholic?" I have preserved through all these years a scrap of *The Limerick Reporter* in which the boy's answer was given in precisely these words and no more "Because Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary." The answer was rather curt and abrupt, but really it contained a full and sufficient reason for the faith that was in him.

When we remember the attitude of the Catholic Church and of her alone towards the Mother of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ it is proof enough that this is the Church founded by the Son of that Immaculate Mother. So it has seemed plain to many who had not the happiness of being born within the Church's bosom, but to whom God sent His summons by angel or by star; and they came, and peered wistfully into the Holy House, "and, entering in, they found the Child with Mary His Mother."

Ave, Eva!

One of the most extraordinary manifestations of the goodness and mercy of God is the blessed fact that He did not leave our first parents for centuries, nor even for years, in doubt as to the consequences of their fall; but in the same breath in which He issued His edict of banishment He promised the redemption. Mary was foretold as the Cause of our Joy before Eve had well begun to shed the first human tears. And not only was the redemption promised as to be wrought far in the future, but the redeeming grace began there and then to act and to prevail.

Father Faber* states this in his own expansive way: "Just as the separate orders of nature and grace were by the sweet love of God started in the same act, so the promise of the Saviour and the actual operation of saving grace followed at once upon the Fall, and fallen nature was straightway placed upon the road of reparation and redemption. Thus is it always in the love of God. There is a pathetic semblance of impatience about it—an eagerness to anticipate, a quickness

* "Creator and Creature," p. 32.

to interfere, an unnecessary profusion in remedying, a perpetual tendency to keep outstripping itself and outdoing itself; and in all these ways is it evermore overrunning all creation, beautifying and glorifying it with its own eternal splendours."

Let us continue to dwell a little longer on this primal mystery of mercy, putting the same thoughts into tamer words. As in the earliest record of God's dealings with man, the Blessed Virgin Mary's place in the divine mind is expressed with a clearness and an emphasis that we should hardly have expected; so, too, we could not have dared to expect the rapidity, the instantaneousness, with which the redemption of mankind followed upon their fall. But the fallen world had to wait four thousand years for its Redeemer; and a space of four thousand years is more than an instant, you will say. Yes, but the Creator of men hardly left in suspense for an instant His purpose of being also their Redeemer. The redemption was wrought by promise and acceptance long before the Son of Mary died upon the cross. Jesus is called in the Apocalypse "the Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world"; for all mercy and grace from the beginning were given in view of His death and passion.

And does not Almighty God seem to be in haste to reveal the designs of His mercy to His poor

fallen children? If we were ignorant of what followed the sin of our first parents, and if we presumed to conjecture God's treatment of His rebellious creatures, we could not dare to conjecture so prompt and overwhelming a display of the divine compassion as that which startles us here at the very first. We might have supposed that our sinful parents would be cast out ignominiously from Paradise, and left to toil on through centuries of penance in dreadful uncertainty under the wrath of God, without a word of comfort and hope, and only relieved of their misery toward the very end by the promise of a Redeemer who would repair the evil they had wrought. And even this would be a marvellous stretch of the infinite mercy of God.

But God in His mercy did not try them so far. In such a supposition, how could they have hoped? Now, God does not want from the sinner the contrition of despair, but the contrition of love and hope. Christian sorrow is not the wintry hailstorm that blasts and destroys, but the genial April shower that freshens and fertilises, while it lets us see where the sun is shining behind the clouds.

And therefore God in His inexhaustible and illimitable compassion raised up our fallen parents instantly from the depth of despair, announcing the redemption almost in the very moment of

the Fall, and saying to the tempter, the enemy of the human race: "I will place enmity between thee and the Woman, and between her seed and thy seed; and she shall crush thy head." It matters little whether the sacred text be "*She* shall crush" or "*It* shall crush"; for what the Woman does is done through her Divine Son. And this is the only point that concerns us now, that in this original revelation, this first disclosure of the world's redemption, the Redeemer is before the divine mind as the Seed of the Woman, the Son of Mary; and so here, at the very beginning foretold and prefigured, we "find the Child with His Mother."

Not only foretold, but prefigured. Eve has always been accepted as a type and figure of the Blessed Virgin. Mary is the new Eve. As St. Paul says, in his Epistle to the Romans (v. 14), that Adam was a figure of Him who was to come, so it may be said that Eve was a figure of her who was to come—the Messiah's Mother. This comparison runs through all the monuments of Christian antiquity—through the writings of the Fathers, through the hymns and sacred offices of the Church. St. Justin, St. Irenæus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Ephraim, St. Augustine—these are some of the witnesses cited from the early centuries, constantly urging that Mary is the Second Eve, as the Second Adam is Jesus.

What magnificent conclusions follow immediately from this title, this parallelism, this juxtaposition, with regard to the pre-eminent position of the Blessed Virgin among God's human creatures, her transcendent privileges and power! Eve was created in a state of innocence, queen of the unfallen world; Mary was conceived immaculate, and raised to be Queen of the world redeemed; to whom also in Paschal Time we cry: *Regina cœli, lætare*—"Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven!" But our everlasting Paschal Time will be a happy eternity. Heaven is not Advent or Lent, but the joyful season of the Resurrection and Ascension, which is made perfect and complete by the assumption and coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother and our Queen. Hail, Mary, second and better Eve, true Mother of all the truly living! *Ave, Eva!*

The Title "Mother of God." *

THERE are few subjects in religious controversy on which it is more a duty to avoid all kinds of bitterness towards our adversaries than the honour paid to our Blessed Lady. "If I believed as you believe," says an atheist to careless and indifferent Christians, "I would go barefoot through the world to proclaim the folly of living as you live." And if our adversaries knew what we know and believed what we believed, and are bound by our very faith to believe, regarding the ever-glorious Virgin, they might not—and many of them assuredly would not—yield to us in devotion toward her. But, unfortunately, there is between us a radical difference of opinion, a divergence of belief, on a fundamental point.

The truth is that non-Catholics, generally speaking—for, doubtless, there is a large class of exceptions—do not know, and, still more generally,

* This theological essay and the one that follows it are not my own. I have preserved "Thoughts on the Assumption" as a relic of a very holy and gifted friend, Father William Hughes, S.J., who died on the 2nd of April, 1902, after the self-sacrificing and fruitful labours of many years in Australia. The writer of the present paper, which was published in *The Ave Maria,* is Father John Naughton, S.J.

do not recognise, the doctrine of the Divine Maternity. The idea essentially involved in the truth of the Incarnation is hidden from them. They do not believe Mary to be the Mother of God. They do not believe we hold it; and when we profess it, they conceive that we must be speaking the language of metaphor—it is only by some figure of speech; some playing on a double sense; some poetical, but unreal, conception of the mind; some devotional sentiment, not supposed to be severely and dogmatically true. That Mary was in very deed God's Mother, that the Eternal became her Child in all the plenitude of truth, that with all that inherent realism with which each of us is a mother's child He was hers, they neither believe themselves nor conceive that we believe.

Any one who has had much to do with intelligent converts will at once recognise the truth of what we say. When you introduce to them the subject of Mary, they will speak of her with profound reverence, and even love. She is the "Virgin of Isaias," the Woman of the Protogospel, of whom the promised One was born; the noblest and fairest of God's creatures; she is the Mother of Christ and the Mother of the Redeemer—the one whose seed crushed the serpent's head. But when, with the light of faith in your eyes and the lamp of faith to guide your steps, you advance and

call her, as you have been taught from very childhood to call her, Mother of God, they draw back. Stopped by an incredulity, as the Israelites were stopped when just within sight of the Promised Land, they draw back from the one great truth that constitutes all the prerogatives, all the dignity, of Mary.

And, bad as this is, there is something worse still. If, turning from the Blessed Mother, you speak of her Divine Child, there is a correlative but far more serious error. One can not fail to be struck by the profound and personal love with which they speak of Him. He is their *Alpha* and *Omega*—the One on whom they cast the burden of their sorrow, rest all their hope, and lean for comfort and consolation. He is the "Messiah," "the Redeemer," "the Saviour," "the Son of the Most High," "the Son of God." But if, in the full light of Catholic faith, you ask them, "Is He who was born of Mary—that Child in the Crib—is He God? Is He your God?" very often you have the unutterable pain of hearing them, unconsciously indeed, but none the less really, "dissolve the Lord Jesus Christ." In very reverence they hesitate—they put up their hands to save the ark from falling. You are going too far for them. Much as they love Jesus of Nazareth, they would not like precisely to say *that;* and if forced to give an answer at all on a

subject on which they would prefer to keep silence, they would say, "No."

Though we have said it before, it would be wrong not to say it again: there are many exceptions to this; but, then, they are *exceptions*. What we have described is, as a rule, the feeling and belief of by far the greater number outside the pale of the Catholic Church. They have a fundamentally erroneous idea of the nature of the Incarnation. They have lost the key to its understanding. They ignore the Divine Maternity, or they explain it away. There was no room for her in the inn of Bethlehem; and, with Mary, Jesus too retired into the grotto. They have some vague belief that of her a most holy and perfect but purely human child was born, to whom the Godhead was afterward united, and in whom the Divinity afterward personally dwelt; whereas no purely human child—no mere man—was ever born of Mary. The only person born of her was the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He was man indeed, but only by being the God-Man—God, in that He was born of the Father from all eternity; man, in that He, the same, and not another, was born of Mary in time.

There is, of course, no proportion, much less any equality, between these two generations of the Child; but then, the Word in the Beginning, that was with God, before all things were made,

the same it was who was made flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. Without further comparison than that of simple truth, as truly as God was His Father, because He communicated to Him from all eternity His divine nature, so truly is Mary His Mother, because she gave Him, and He took from her, that human nature in which He dwelt amongst us, and in which we have seen the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Most High.

These things are comparatively easy to us, because the teachings of faith, as well as its instincts, have long made them familiar. There is no need to explain to the simplest Catholic that Mary was not the Mother of the divinity of Our Lord. In that divinity He was from unbeginning eternity God of God, Light of Light, before Mary herself was created. He was always God, because He was always born of the Father. From Him He had His divinity—His divine nature. But He was not always man. He was not man till He was born of the Virgin. She gave Him His human nature, and from the moment of His Incarnation He had for evermore two natures; and in one as well as in the other it was the same God who subsisted. It was the Person of the Word that constituted the bond of the hypostatic union between them, and both natures belonged alike to the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity

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In every other instance where mere man is born, his soul and body subsist in themselves and give him an individuality of his own. His human nature finds its completion in itself, and gives him that human personality by which He is one as distinguished from another. But in our Divine Lord there was no human personality: the Person of God took its place. There was human nature complete and entire. But His human nature—His body and soul—never for a moment subsisted in themselves apart and alone, but were, in the instant of creation, assumed by, and united with, and fitted unto, the Person of God Himself. It was the Word that was made flesh. It was God that was made man. It was He who was born, and He alone to whom the Virgin gave birth; and as different mothers give birth, this to one, and that to another, the One to whom the Virgin of Israel gave birth was her Creator and her God. The greatest of all her titles, the foundation of all her dignity, the reason of all her privileges, the explanation of all the honour we pay her, is found here—that we can hail her as we do, "Mother of God."

Such is the faith of the Catholic Church—the great doctrine for which she fought so strenuously in the Council of Ephesus. Not a doctrine merely, but a dogma as well; for in it is involved the true nature of the Incarnation, with its manifold

consequences. Without it there is no real Christianity ; without its belief, no real Christian. Without it, the whole series of fundamental truths that make up revealed religion would fall to the ground. For if Mary were not the Mother of God, then *God* was not born of her ; *He* did not become man ; He did not live amongst us here, and die for our redemption on the cross. Without the truth of the Divine Maternity the keystone of the arch were gone.

And in proportion as we have reason to be grateful to the Church for her wisdom in keeping this truth prominently and incessantly before us, have we reason to be gentle with those who do not think as we think, only because they do not know as we know. In our religious training our minds have been, with purpose aforethought, fixed on this as a great central truth till there is nothing so familiar to us in sacred history as the scene and the surroundings in which it was accomplished. Millions of times we have repeated the words with which Gabriel, descending from the heavens—when the fulness of time had come—greeted Mary : " Hail, full of grace : the Lord is with thee." We know that when she said, " Be it done unto me according to thy word," swift-winged angel as he was, he had not reached the throne before the Mystery of mysteries was accomplished. In a moment—in as little time

as it took to create the light, when God said, "Let it be, and it was,"—that Virgin was Virgin-Mother of a Child Divine. And not that alone do we know, but, through the mercy of God revealing it to us, we know still more—even the marvellous manner of its accomplishment. We know that the Power of the Most High—the Spirit of God proceeding eternally from the Father and the Son—the Holy Ghost—overshadowed her, and from out her purest veins formed the body, and vivified it with the soul—the adorable body and the adorable soul—of Christ; for in that instant they were both fitted unto the Eternal Word, and assumed as His own.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, what mightier thing could He who is mighty have done unto thee? "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb!" May we be, each of us and all of us, part fulfilment of thy prophecy, and with every generation of the elect call thee blessed, love thee more and know thee better: that we may the better know Him whom to know is eternal life; and the better love Him whom if any one loveth not he is anathema! Continue to be a Mother to us, and be a Mother to them who yet know thee not; that so thy only and Divine Child may be unto us all "the First-Born of many brethren."

Thoughts on the Assumption.*

1.

THE great outlines of the devotion to the Mother of God are clearly traced in the early monuments of Christian tradition. Almost at the start of Christianity we find, to borrow Dr. Newman's words, the ever-blessed immaculate Mother of God exercising her office as advocate of sinners, standing by the sacrifice as she stood by the cross, and offering up and applying its infinite merits and incommunicable virtue in union with priest and people. Moreover, the sweet image of Mary clasping her Child to her bosom cheered our first fathers in the faith within those dark retreats to which the malice of a world, rendered savage by corruption, had driven them for refuge. Virgin-Mother and Child-God have ever been, and shall ever be, together enshrined in the hearts of the faithful, just as they have been from the beginning together assailed by the mocking blasphemies of the pagan and the subtle malice of the heretic.

* See note to the preceding essay.

The doctrine concerning Mary's privileges forms, in a true sense, the rampart of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. She defends in the Church militant the dogma of her Son's two Natures united in one Divine Person, as of old she protected Him in His infancy from the rage of the tyrant Herod. The Council of Ephesus vindicates the mystery of the Incarnation by declaring Mary *Theotokos*, *Deipara*, "Mother of God." She conceived the Son of God; she brought forth the Son of God; she is God's own true Mother. The simplest child can see that the only Son of God's Mother must needs be God. We might pursue the same train of thought with respect to her virginal Maternity. Her perpetual Virginity which the Holy Ghost miraculously crowned with the honours of motherhood, removes all notion of mere human origin from the Blessed Fruit of her womb. Thus her virginal and divine maternity illustrates and manifests the Godhead and Manhood of Jesus Christ. And hence that gentle form, crowned with the mystic lily and the red rose, and folding the little Babe with loving arms, draws us nigher to the Word Incarnate by filling our hearts with the freshness, the beauty, the sinlessness, the unspeakable dignity of his Maiden Mother.

To the Divine Motherhood the other privileges of Mary may be referred, since they either

prepare the way for that sublime office or flow from it almost as natural consequences. The great fact that Mary conceived the Son of God, that the Eternal Word did not shrink from the Virgin's womb, is the mystery of mysteries, the crown and sum of all the great things which He who is mighty hath wrought in her behalf.

As the perception of this grand truth, and of the simple ideas which group themselves around it, grew in depth and keenness, the other privileges of her who is full of grace came out before the mind in bolder relief. Jesus shed His light around His Blessed Mother, and the faithful followed its course, now to the wondrous message of Gabriel by which she became the Mother of God, now to the foot of the cross where she became the mother of men. But more slowly did they trace that divine light as it shone on the beginning and on the end of Mary's mortal course. It shone of old as it shines now—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—but the Holy Ghost turned the eyes of the faithful to Jesus and Mary united, before He led them to gaze on the solitary figure of Mary, as she came forth from the hands of the Most High, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, gleaming with innocence and grace; or, again, as she went back to the Maker's hands who made her so

peerless, with the soul which knew not sin, and the virginal body which defied corruption.

Our hearts swell with joy as we ponder on the grand hymn of praise in which Pius IX. proclaimed our Lady's exemption from the sad heritage of Adam's children. By a miracle of redeeming mercy she is sanctified before sin had time to enter her soul. She rises in brightness and beauty, so that we naturally expect her setting to be even as her rising, and that clouds and darkness shall never settle permanently around aught so radiant and so fair.

That the Mother of God is in heaven both in body and in soul is a truth so dear to every Catholic heart that few would have the hardihood to call it in question. The belief in the anticipated resurrection of our Lady is spread so far and wide among pastors and people, and is so closely bound up with the other truths which faith teaches concerning her privileges, that any denial of it would imply that the gainsayer heeded not the practical teaching of the Church, and had yet great way to make in the knowledge and love of the Mother of God.

The scope of this paper does not permit us to do more than point out the theological foundations on which this doctrine is based. They are the following. The Feast of the Assumption has been kept in both the Eastern

and Western Churches for more than a thousand years, as the liturgies, calendars, and several martyrologies testify. From the eighth century we have the homilies and panegyrics of many of the greatest saints in the East and in the West explaining this doctrine of the Assumption of our Lady in body and soul into heaven. We then find it pass from the Fathers to the Scholastics, by whom it was generally received. Suarez could say, in his day, that it was so widely spread through the Church that no pious Catholic could call it in question; and that, though it was not of faith, yet it had the same degree of certainty as the doctrine (since defined) of the Immaculate Conception. Benedict XIV. roundly asserts that all theologians hold it. The definition of the Immaculate Conception has given new force to the arguments in its favour. Hence, theologians generally brand the opposite opinion with the censure of temerity or error. All these arguments show what is the universal and ordinary practical teaching of the Church on the matter. If this ordinary *magisterium* had proposed it as having been divinely revealed, it would, then, be of divine and Catholic faith according to the definition of the Vatican Council. It has not done so. However, when the ordinary and universal *magisterium* of the Church proposes something, not precisely as having been formally revealed,

but yet as belonging to the order of religious truth, there is then, according to the Catholic Doctors, a sure guarantee against error.

These principles furnish a reply to the difficulties against the Assumption which were urged by Tillemont, Launoy, and those who in the last century followed the same dangerous line. They tried to make out that the doctrine was founded merely on those spiritual romances known by the name of apocrypha, and that, as these documents are spurious, the doctrine must fall to the ground. We admit that an historian, if he confine himself within the limits of his own science, would find it no easy matter to draw out a convincing proof for the Assumption. But the same fact may fall within the domain of history and of theology. Now, as theology has means of attaining truth distinct from those of history, it reaches to facts to which history cannot come, almost in the same way as one sense detects what another cannot. It is not upon the apocrypha that the doctrine of the Assumption is grounded, but upon the general sentiment of the Church, manifested by the several documents I mentioned already. Nor does this general belief touch the circumstances narrated in the apocrypha. It is disputed where the Blessed Virgin died, whether at Ephesus or Jerusalem; what was the year of her death; how long she remained in the tomb;

who were the witnesses of her resurrection, and what circumstances attended it. But the universal sentiment is, that she rose from death to live in glory; and that general sentiment of the Church is never deceived in the matter of religious truth. Hence, it came to pass that the arguments urged by the opponents of this doctrine made a momentary splash, like a stone cast into a tranquil stream, but yet a little while, and all was as bright and calm as if they had never been known.

In order to show that this doctrine belongs to the order of religious truth, we shall now bring together some of the theological reasons with which it has been proposed in the course of Catholic tradition. These reasons have considerable force if they be well pondered. It is not required, however, for the argument that they prove the necessity of the Assumption by themselves. If they closely link the Assumption with other religious truths, and exhibit it as their fitting counterpart and evolution, it is clear that those who proposed the Assumption with such reasons regarded it as being in the same order as the reasons themselves. These will throw some light, too, on the bearing of the Assumption on the other privileges of Mary, and perhaps make us better disposed to follow the sweet admonition which the Poet of the

Schools represents himself as receiving in Paradise from the lips of St. Bernard (Parad. xxxv. 85) :—

> "Riguarda ormai nella faccia ch' a Cristo
> Più s'assomiglia, che la sua chiarezza
> Sola ti puo disporre a vedder Cristo." *

One of the great traditional ideas concerning Mary is, that she is the New Eve sharing in the privileges of the New Adam, as our first mother shared in the privileges of our first father. The first Eve, virgin and innocent, shared in the immortality proper to the first Adam. According to St. Augustine, this gift consisted in *posse non mori*—that is, in the power of warding off death as long as innocence was preserved. Another immortality belonged to the New Adam. He was not to keep Death for ever at arm's length, but rather, whilst yielding to his power, to rob him of his victory. But in what consists this victory if not in making the human frame pass through corruption to its primitive dust? It is only when that dust shall have been reassumed, when what is mortal shall have put on immortality, and what is corruptible shall have put on glory and incorruption, that

* "Look now into the face that unto Christ
Hath most resemblance, for *its* brightness only
Is able to prepare thee to see Christ."
(Longfellow's Translation.)

shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death, where is thy victory?" Now, through the merits of Christ, even we are to share in this victory at the end of the world, as by the sin of Adam we have all been brought under the yoke of death. Moreover, the extent to which we are to share in the triumph over death is measured according to the closeness of our union with Jesus Christ. Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection, and then every one in his order. The New Eve is united to the New Adam, not according to the order of our fallen race, but according to an order that is proper to herself alone. She is joined to Him in the closest bands of kindred, in the closest bands of charity. Nature and grace combined to render the order of her union with Him such as can never be equalled in kind or degree; and both claim a singular and exceptional participation in the privilege of his immortality.

II.

The holiness of Mary's virginal body seems, also, to claim at the hands of her Divine Son that special honour and reverence implied in the Assumption. As she was destined to give of her substance a human frame to the Eternal Word, her pure flesh was sanctified and dedicated to God

by a most special consecration. The holiness of the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ was, according to the holy Fathers, sufficient to claim a glorious resurrection from the Almighty. It is true that the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ is anointed with the holiness of the Godhead, to which it was inseparably united in the Incarnation, and that, on this account, the sanctity of Mary must, of necessity, be infinitely less ; yet it is, nevertheless, so perfect and so peerless as to guard her sacred flesh from the ravage of the tomb.

The holy Fathers speak of her as the living temple of the Most High, the holy tabernacle of the Most Blessed Trinity, the living ark of the Covenant, fashioned of incorruptible wood, and overlaid with the purest gold. They also apply to her those passages of the Old Testament, which describe the glories of the Eternal Word and his procession from the bosom of the Eternal Father. St. Ephrem sums up the Catholic doctrine when he cries out in one of his beautiful poems : "Thou (Christ) and thy Mother are indeed passing fair, for in Thee, Lord, there is no spot, nor any stain in thy Mother!" This freedom from all stain, beginning in her Immaculate Conception, and persevering through her whole life in the perfect obedience of sense to reason, and reason to grace, though it does not keep away death, to which even her Son sub-

mitted, preserves her from death's dreadful sequel. Corruption is, in the moral order, the fit penalty of concupiscence, the medicinal humiliation of all proud and rebellious flesh. Hence, the all-pure and sacred body of Mary was exempted from that law under which all mere earthly beauty fades and withers into dust.

Our next argument is taken from analogy. About this species of argument St. Francis de Sales has a pretty story. A Calvinist preacher was working hard, and not unsuccessfully, to keep back those who at Thonon were seriously minded to return to the Church of their fathers. According to him, analogy was altogether on the Protestant side, and he defied any Catholic to meet him on that ground. St. Francis wrote a little work on the Creed to show that this fearful-looking weapon was, in the minister's hands, a mere sword of wood; or, to drop metaphor, that the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist did not "destroy the symbol and the analogy of faith." "For," adds the saint, "the minister affected to use the word analogy, not understood by his hearers, in order to appear mighty learned."

As we have other intentions, we will try to give some illustrations of what is meant by this analogy or proportion. Poets sometimes take an unfair advantage of our simplicity. They begin

a beautiful description moving onward with harmony and grace towards the complete portraiture of some grand idea, but when our fancy is warmed, and expectation is at its height, they let us down to something very commonplace indeed. They may smile at us when we cry out with Desdemona, "O most lame and impotent conclusion!" but we cannot help feeling, all the same, that we have been hardly dealt with. They succeed in entrapping us, because we love proportion between part and part, and appreciate whatever is rendered perfect by symmetrical evolution according to a uniform type. We require, then, in true and serious art, harmony and proportion between the colours, lights, shades, and forms, which make up a picture, whether painted with pen or pencil. If we turn from art, which Dante quaintly calls "God's grandchild," to Nature, which is His child, we can trace similar laws of proportion in the works of Him who, in the old Christian language, is styled the Great Artist. Every one of His works is perfectly disposed, after its kind, according to number, weight, and measure. In the higher forms of life, the different parts which go to make up an organised being are so manifestly in accordance with each other, and conspire so harmoniously to the perfection of the whole, that those who have studied the laws of the Divine

Art in the works of Nature can, from a few chance fragments, delineate the complete type of a species hitherto unknown.

The world of Grace, which pre-supposes Nature, is ordered according to the laws of a more perfect harmony. Faith opens to our mental eye regions of wondrous beauty and variety, wherein the Divine Wisdom, disporting Itself, reacheth, in a more excellent way, from end to end mightily, and disposeth all things sweetly. In this fair world Mary is the masterpiece of the divine hand. If, then, we can discern some of the rich tints which glow in that gracious figure, and trace, through part of their course, the lines which portray the Mother of God, as they move on in perfect grace, beauty, and loveliness, we can well perceive what would be out of harmony with the perfection which they inclose, though our mind faints in the effort to conceive the hidden splendour which they promise. If we examine the grand outlines of Mary's excellence, we find that they proceed in such sort as to include whatever is perfect in nature and grace, and to avoid even the shadow of whatever is harsh and unseemly. She springs in the natural course from Adam, yet she is no child of wrath. She possesses our nature in its fulness, yet never felt our nature's wounds. Whilst others grope in ignorance, faint in well-

doing, turn shuddering from the right path on encountering obstacles, in order to follow, at least for some moments, the slippery road which winds down to the abyss, Mary progresses always by the narrow way, her mind ever basking in the light of God, her heart filled with love, with modesty, purity, and peace continually guiding her heavenward steps. She joins the marriage bond to the sacred vow of virginity, and maternal fruitfulness to the flower of maiden integrity. She is the handmaid of the Lord, His creature, and yet His mother. Must we not add that, though yielding to Death, she conquers Him in the tomb, by rising in renewed youth to soar like the eagle above the clouds to the blissful kingdom where her Son reigns in glory? No other end is worthy of her Maker. No other end is worthy of her whom the Church represents as the living image of Eternal Wisdom—"I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all the grace of the way and of the truth, in me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire me and be filled with my fruits. For my spirit is sweet above honey, and my inheritance above honey and the honeycomb. My memory is unto everlasting generations." *

* Ecclesiasticus xxiv.

III.

Along with the arguments already given, we might bring forward several others from the inexhaustible sources of Christian tradition concerning Mary's privileges. In order, however, not to pursue the matter too far, we shall touch on only two more. Mary, by reason of her stainless origin, was exempt from the other penalties of original sin, or shared in them only after the fashion in which they were assumed by her Divine Son. Hence, we cannot admit without clear proof, and proof there is none, that she fell under that part of the primal curse: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

Finally, Mary's plenitude of grace and mercy requires as its meet recompense the plenitude of glory. And glory cannot be complete in all its perfection if body and soul are not knit together in the same life of happiness. A little reflection will enable us to take in the force of this argument. Our Divine Lord represents the pursuit of eternal life as a species of traffic, and bids men trade till He come. The capital with which we are furnished is His grace, and our business, if we may so speak, prospers in proportion to the extent of our capital, and the amount of vigorous, persevering labour we employ in turning

it to advantage. Consequently, our great affair progresses in the compound ratio of God's graces and our own efforts. Let us examine each of these elements as they are found in ever-blessed Mary.

In comparison with her, even the greatest saints have been slack in their work. Some of them have been for years held back by a hankering after the folly of the world; in all, the sluggishness of the body weighed down the soul, and clogged its heavenly aspirings; none, so far as we know, were always so perfectly on their guard as for a lifetime to resist the bent of nature towards sin. According to the Council of Trent, it is Mary's special privilege never to have given the slightest offence to her Maker; and nowhere is it authentically recorded that any of the saints have been similarly favoured. Mary knew no sin, and lost no time. Nature in her perfectly recovered the strength for doing good with which it was originally endowed. Moreover, she was endowed with the plenitude of grace in order to make her worthy, as far as a creature can be, of an office whose sublime grandeur fills heaven and earth with wonder. All these stupendous gifts she turned to the best account, so that her soul, without ceasing, magnified the Lord, until her sweetness and purity and gentle lovingness drew Him down from the seat of His glory to nestle as a little Child in her bosom. It is no wonder,

then, that she began far beyond where other creatures end; that the treasure of her merit transcends the united hoardings of men and angels; that her worth outprices the whole universe of creatures; that she is addressed by the Spouse as his beautiful one, his only love, and foreshadowed by the mystic city, whose foundations are in the holy mountains, and whose gates the Lord loveth above all the tabernacles of Jacob.

And doth He hunger to crown her with the crown of immortality? "Arise," He saith, "make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. The winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: the fig-tree hath put forth her green figs: the vines in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come. My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, show me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet and thy face comely" (*Cant.* ii.).

So are they joined in glory, the Man and the Woman, the Virgin and her Seed; the Man who ransomed us with His own dear blood, the Woman who, for our sake, consented to the payment of that dread price: Jesus, who won the daily

bread by the labours of His Passion; Mary, whose motherly hands break it to the children.

They are the last of three groups that shall be the eternal wonder of the human race. The first is a human pair standing in a bright garden beside a noble tree crowded with pleasant fruit. The woman, with clouded look and eager voice, offers to the man some of the fruit which she has plucked from that fair tree. He knows the awful doom; he eats, and all is lost.

The next pair are upon a hill around which darkness settles at noon. On its top there is a tree to which the Man is nailed by the hands and feet. The Woman stands before the tree, and on her face is traced a tablet of unutterable woe. The Man, bowing down His thorn-crowned head, gives up the ghost, and all is saved.

The third group is the same that was upon the mountain, but how changed is the scene! The Man now sits at the right hand of God the Father, in glory and in joy, with no trace of suffering save the five resplendent wounds whence flowed our redemption. Millions and millions of bright intelligences, whose glory passes the utmost stretch of reason to conceive, bow down before Him in prostrate adoration. But far above this princely throng of worshippers, close to the Man, on whom she bends her meek eyes in loving awe and wonder, is the Woman, in whom is

shrined whatever there can be in maid and mother that is lovely and pure and tender, crowned with the fulness of grace, and transfigured into the fulness of glory :—

> *" Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,*
> *Umile ed alta piu che creatura,*
> *Termine fisso d'eterno consiglio :*
> *Tu se' colei che l'umana natura*
> *Nobilitasti si che 'l suo Fattore*
> *Non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.*
> *In te misericordia, in te pietate,*
> *In te magnificenza, in te s' aduna*
> *Quantunque in creatura è di bontate."*

" Thou Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Humble and high beyond all other creature,
The limit fixed of the eternal counsel.
Thou art the one who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make Himself its creature.
In thee compassion is, in thee is pity,
In thee magnificence ; in thee unites
Whate'er of goodness is in any creature."

(Dante, *Paradiso* xxxiii., Longfellow's translation.)

Jesus and Mary.

A Visit to the Blessed Sacrament on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady.

GLORY be to the Father and to Thee, O Lord God, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, and to the Holy Ghost. Thou art here present, O Jesus, in Thy sacred Humanity and Divinity, true man and true God, Thou who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest one God through all the ages of an unbeginning and never ending eternity. Out of this year of our mortal life, which is slipping away at every instant, this is the day on which we call to mind that glorious and happy day in the past on which Thou didst take up into Thy heavenly home Her who had made a home for Thee at Nazareth. Her term of weary waiting was over at last. It seems strange to us, poor ignorant creatures, that Thou couldst be content to leave Thy Blessed Mother so long after Thee, but even *we* can dimly conjecture the immense additions made to her inconceivable stores of grace and merit by the prayers and patience of those long years during

which the sigh of her Immaculate Heart must have been at every instant that pathetic cry of the Psalmist: "Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged!" (Ps. cxix. 5). But at last, on the first Feast of the Assumption, Thou didst bid her come to Thee over the waters; or rather Thou didst come for her, and, as a loving son, didst embrace her tenderly and lift her up to her high throne in heaven. There she has reigned ever since, and there she shall reign for ever, Queen of Angels, Queen of all Saints, in the enjoyment of the ineffable joy and glory which are Thy Mother's share of heaven. Ah, if I had the pure, unselfish love that I ought to have for Thee, O Lord, and for Thy Blessed Mother, it ought to make me happy to think of Thy infinite happiness, and hers, as near to infinite as the highest and purest of creatures can attain. A holy man who did much by word and work for Thy glory,* O Lord, when he was on earth, and who must now be with Thee in heaven, wrote once: "When I consider how short life is, and how near may be the time of reunion with those who are now separated from us by death, I feel all the temptations of self-love and other evil inclinations pass away." Not alone Thy holy human creatures, O Lord, with whom we have been linked during our earthly pilgrimage, but

* Frederic Ozanam, founder of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

still more the heavenly citizens to whom we have prayed during life, and, most of all, Mary our Mother, and Thou her Divine Son. In Thy merciful love Thou willest her to take an interest in each of us, her poor exiled children. Would that she, my heavenly Mother, could turn the eyes of Thy mercy upon me with those words that the Father spoke of Thee: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The first part is true, I am dear to her, I am her child, she has a mother's heart for me—but ah! how much is there in my life and in my heart that must displease her sadly! May her prayers obtain for me the grace to wipe out all the sinful past with the tears of true contrition, and to use my little remnant of life in fitting myself a little better for the heavenly life that I hope for, that I must dare to hope for, but which I must labour for more earnestly than alas! I have hitherto done. "O Jesus, grant that I may always love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt." *Always.* In life, in death, and for all eternity: for, as long as Thy love is in my heart, it must be well with me. Amen, amen!—for ever, Lord Jesus, my God!

The "Memorare" in Various Forms.

I REMEMBER with pleasure that I heard a somewhat Bohemian Irishman call the *Memorare* the finest outburst of prayer that he was acquainted with. I hope he has repeated it occasionally since then, for his surroundings have not been of the safest. God help some poor young men who think themselves greatly to be envied.

I have looked in vain for some discussion of the authorship of this prayer. As the *Anima Christi* is often called the Prayer of St. Ignatius, though it was in use hundreds of years before St. Ignatius was born, so it is certain that "the *Memorare* of St. Bernard" is a misnomer. But St. Ignatius in his *Exercitia Spiritualia* makes us repeat constantly the *Anima Christi*, and so was the propagator, though not the author, of this prayer: what connection has St. Bernard with the *Memorare?*

In the latest edition of the *Raccolta* it is called simply *Orazione*, and it is given thus:—

"*Memorare, O piissima Virgo Maria, non esse auditum a saeculo quemquam ad tua currentem praesidia, tua implorantem auxilia, tua petentem suffragia, esse dere-*

lictum. Ego, tali animatus confidentia, ad Te, Virgo Virginum, Mater, curro; ad Te venio; coram Te gemens peccator assisto. Noli, Mater Verbi, verba mea despicere, sed audi propitia et exaudi. Amen."

Pope Pius IX., by a rescript of the Holy Congregation of Indulgences, dated December 11, 1846, granted an indulgence of three hundred days every time we say this prayer, and a plenary indulgence to those who say it every day for a month, to be gained on any day they choose, on the usual conditions of Confession, Communion, visiting a church and praying there according to the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

But it is curious that exactly the same indulgences had been granted less than three months before (September 23, 1846) for the recitation of the same prayer with sundry omissions and additions. In the English translation of the *Raccolta*, however, published in 1857, by Cardinal Newman's specially loved and trusted friend, Father Ambrose St. John, we find that the common *Memorare* was in reality first in the field, being indulgenced at the request of Cardinal de Bonald, Archbishop of Lyons, July 25, 1846; but this was at first for all the faithful in the kingdom of France only, and not extended to the whole Catholic world for ever till the following December 11, 1846, "at the prayer of several ecclesiastics and persons of consideration in

Rome." What is the history of this rival of the *Memorare*, which Father St. John calls "the prayer *Ave Augustissima*," from its opening words?

"*Ave, Augustissima, Regina pacis, sanctissima Mater Dei, per sacratissimum Cor Jesu Filii tui principis pacis, fac ut quiescat ira ipsius et regnet super nos in pace. Memorare, O piissima Virgo Maria, non esse auditum a saeculo quenquam tua petentem suffragia esse derelictum. Ego tali animatus confidentia ad te venio. Noli, Mater Verbi, verba mea despicere, sed audi propitia et exaudi. O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.*"

Why does Father St. John translate *Augustissima* by "Empress"? Here is his English version:—

"Hail, Empress, Queen of Peace, holiest Mother of God, by the Sacred Heart of Jesus thy Son, the Prince of Peace, cause His anger to cease from us, that so He may reign over us in holy peace. Be mindful, Mary, tenderest Virgin, that from of old never hath it been heard that he who asks thy prayers was forsaken of God. In this lively trust I come to thee. Cast not my words behind thee, Mother of the Word; but in thy loving kindness hear and do, gentle, tender, sweet Virgin Mary."

That last *O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria* is translated earlier in the book, "O merciful, O tender, O sweet Virgin Mary." "Clement" and "pious" do not give the proper

meaning here. Father St. John in the next page translated differently the words that are common to the foregoing prayer and to the following *Memorare* :—

"Remember, Mary, tenderest-hearted Virgin, how from of old the ear hath never heard that he who ran to thee for refuge, implored thy help, and sought thy prayers, was forsaken of God. Virgin of virgins, Mother, emboldened by this confidence, I fly to thee, to thee I come, and in thy presence I, a weeping sinner, stand. Mother of the Word Incarnate, O cast not away my prayer, but in thy pity hear and answer. Amen."

It is a pity that there is not one authorised version to be learned off by heart by all devout clients of Mary. The *Raccolta* also omits the words which are very commonly added after *coram te gemens peccator assisto*—namely, this very desirable addition, *obsecrans ut me in filium perpetuum adoptes et aeternae meae salutis curam in te suscipias.* Is Father St. John right in translating *derelictum* by "forsaken of God"? Why should *currere* be turned into "fly" rather than "run"? The following appears to be a fair working version :—

"Remember, O most tender-hearted Virgin Mary, that never was it heard of in any age that any one who ran to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was ever abandoned. Inspired with this confidence, I run to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother!

To thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful, beseeching thee to adopt me as thy child for ever, and to take upon thee the care of my eternal salvation. Do not, O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise my petition, but graciously hear and grant it." *

Many have tried to turn the *Memorare* into verse; but it is more poetical as it stands. For instance, here is my own paraphrase :—

Remember, holy Mary,
'Twas never heard or known
That any one who sought thee
And made to thee his moan—
That any one who hastened
For shelter to thy care
Was ever yet abandoned
And left to his despair.
No, never, Blessed Virgin,
Most merciful, most kind.
No sinner cries for pity
Who does not pity find.
None, none, O Holy Mary!

And so to thee, my Mother,
With filial faith I call,
For Jesus dying gave thee
As Mother to us all.
To thee, O Queen of Virgins,
O Mother meek, to thee
I run with trustful fondness,
Like child to mother's knee,

* *Verbi* and *verba* are purposely placed together. Might this point be brought out thus?—"O Mother of the Word! these words of mine despise not, but mercifully hear and heed them."

See at thy feet a sinner,
  Groaning and weeping sore—
Ah! throw thy mantle o'er me,
  And let me stray no more.
    No more! O Holy Mary!

Thy Son has died to save me,
  And from His throne on high
His heart this moment yearneth
  For even such as I.
All, all His love remember,
  And oh! remember too
How prompt I am to purpose,
  How slow and frail to do.
Yet scorn not my petitions,
  But patiently give ear,
And help me, O my Mother!
  Most loving and most dear.
    Help, help, O Holy Mary!

Miss Katherine Conway, of Boston, echoes the holy prayer thus :—

Remember, Mother, throned in Heaven's splendour,
  That never on this earth has it been said
That any heart which sought thy pity tender
  Was left uncomforted.

So, wearied of world-friendship's changing fashion,
  And bankrupt of world-treasures utterly,
And trusting in thy mercy and compassion,
  I come at last to thee

Why name to thee my needs in my entreating?—
Thou, taught in human hearts by the Divine,
Long time agone, when soft His heart was beating,
Fond Mother, close to thine!

O plead with Him who on thy breast was cherished,
Sweet sharer in the world's Redemption-pain!
O let it not be said that I have perished,
Where none came yet in vain!

John Bernard Delaney, one of the first Bishops of Manchester in New Hampshire, keeps closer to the original:—

Remember, Blessed Mother,
That never was it known
Who sought thy intercession
Was left to plead alone.
Confiding in thy goodness,
I hasten unto thee:
Let not thy gracious promise
Be broken first for me.
Though most unworthy ever,
Yet hearken to my cry,
And stretch a hand through darkness
To lead me to the sky.

This version is too brief to be faithful. The Rev. Arthur Barry O'Neill, S.C.S., in the *Ave Maria*, takes a larger canvas for his copy:—

Remember, Mary, Virgin tender-hearted!
How from of old the ear hath never heard
That he who to thine arms for refuge darted
Thy help implored with reverent, earnest word,

Thy prayers besought, and on thine interceding
With loving confidence and trust relied,
Did ever futile find his fervent pleading
Or see thy grace and favour e'er denied.

O Virgin Mother, 'mongst all mothers tender,
With equal confidence to thee I fly—
To thee I come as to a sure defender;
A weeping sinner unto thee I cry.
Sweet Mother of the Word Incarnate, hear me!
May e'en my halting words efficient prove!
Cast not away my prayer but deign to cheer me,
And let my sore distress thy pity move.

The same poet in the same pious Magazine—congenial home for such *carmina Mariana*—wrote these lines about the *Memorare*:—

Not for his age alone was Bernard speaking,
O Virgin Mother, amongst all women blest;
When, Thy assistance in his sore need seeking,
The "Memorare" voiced his soul's request.

He echoed but a prayer that long resounded
In fainting hearts o'er all the woeful earth;
The cry for help from those whom sin hath wounded,
In every age since Christ the Saviour's birth.

The echoes of an echo, we repeat it,
With all of Bernard's confidence and love;
And now as ever dost thou kindly greet it,
And grant it, Mother, in thy home above.

It was in the *Ave Maria* also that Brian O'Higgins first published his version of the *Memorare* :—

Remember, remember, O Virgin Mary!
That never in vain did the wanderer seek
Thy strength and comfort and holy guidance
When tempest-worn and spent and weak;
That never ascended the wail of anguish,
Commingled with sorrow's despairing moan,
From the noisome earth, through the clouds of darkness,
Without finding balm at thy radiant throne.

Remember, remember, O Virgin Mary!
And list to a voice that is weak and faint:
I have strayed far out on the sinful ocean
With its waves of passion beyond restraint;
And now, with a heart that is robed in anguish,
O Mother of Pity, to thee I come!
My eyes are dim with their ceaseless weeping,
My feet are weary, my hands are numb.

Remember, remember, O Virgin Mary!
Through the deepening shadows I send my plea:
Guide of the Wanderer, Hope of the Mourner,
Pray to the Child of thy heart for me,
That His tender grace may calm the waters
And pierce the gloom of the gathering night,
And lead me back to that Port of Beauty
Where His mercy shines with a fadeless light.

A little blank space at the foot of the column which contains these stanzas is well filled up with these two questions from one of Cardinal

Newman's sermons: "What shall bring you forward in the narrow way, if you live in the world, but the thought and patronage of Mary? What shall seal your senses, what shall tranquilize your heart, when sights and sounds of danger are around you, but Mary?"

In a French magazine, *Les Annales du très Saint Sacrement*, someone who called himself *Un Malade guéri*, made a sonnet out of the glorious prayer that I have named so often:—

Souvenez-vous, Marie, o Vierge très pieuse,
Que nul n'a jamais dit ni jamais entendu
Qu'un secours ait été vainement attendu
De votre royauté miséricordieuse.

Emu de cet espoir, o Reine glorieuse,
Tout pécheur que je suis, gémissant, éperdu,
Je me jette á vos pieds, et mon âme anxieuse
Attend de vous la paix et son bonheur perdu.

Ah! ne méprisez pas la très humble prière
De mon cœur suppliant! Le front dans la poussière,
J'implore la faveur d'un regard de vos yeux.

Regardez! et prenant en pitié ma misère,
Intercedez pour moi, puissante et bonne Mère,
Auprès de votre Fils qui règne dans les cieux!

The longest of all the poems founded on the *Memorare* appeared in the *Irish Rosary* for June,

1907—five stanzas of eight lines each, by a Dominican Father, who disguises himself (alas! too effectively for many of us) by giving his name in Irish, D. B. an Crataig. The letters *c*, *t*, and *g* in this name are "mortified," and so are we at our invincible ignorance of the grand old tongue which reverences the Blessed Virgin Mary so much as to pronounce her very name differently from other Marys.

October Thoughts about the Rosary.

FROM the feast of the Solemnity of the Most Holy Rosary, which is attached to the first Sunday of October, and from the special devotions first appointed for all the days of this month by Pope Leo XIII., October has come to be called and to be the Month of the Holy Rosary. In Australia, where May is a winter month, October has been officially promoted to the dignity of *Mois de Marie*. Less excuse than all this is needed to justify me in associating October with certain very informal notes about the Rosary, one of which dates as far back as June 26, 1874, when I made this brief extract, never utilised till now, from the ninth chapter of "Grapes and Thorns," by Miss Mary Agnes Tincker :—

"Father Chevreuse took out his beads to exorcise troublesome thoughts and invoke holy ones. It was a saying of his that the beads, when rightly used, had always one end fastened to the girdle of Mary, and were a flowery chain by which she led the soul directly to the throne of God. They proved so to him in this case ; and one after another the Joyful Mysteries were budding and blossoming under his touch, when presently he found himself——"

I have no idea how or where he found himself, for I have not the slightest recollection of the story except that it was very good and very clever. But I have not had time to forget another admirable story which may be very earnestly recommended to convent libraries and readers in general—"By What Authority," by Robert Hugh Benson, son of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, and now (thank God) a Catholic priest. The mistaken notions about Rosary beads entertained by persons outside the Church are well discussed at page 174. The heroine, Isabel Norris, "began to discover that for the Catholic the Person of the Saviour was the very heart of religion . . . and that the worship of the saints and of the Blessed Mother, instead of distracting the Christian soul from the love of God, rather seemed to augment it." She soon "began to understand what the Rosary meant to Catholics. Mistress Corbett had told her what was the actual use of the beads, and how the mysteries of Christ's life and death were to be pondered over as the various prayers were said." But she had still prejudices against what seemed a mechanical and, indeed, superstitious method of praying. One day she saw the beads in the hands of an old nun who in those troubled days of Queen Elizabeth was obliged to live with her sister in her house in the country. "The old lady's eyes were half

closed and her lips just moving, and the beads passing slowly through her fingers." After a while the good Protestant maiden asks her old friend, "How can prayers said over and over again like that be any good?" "Mistress Margaret was silent for a moment. 'I saw young Mrs. Martin last week,' she said, 'with her little girl in her lap. Amy had her arms round her mother's neck and was being rocked to and fro, and every time she rocked she said *O Mother!*' 'But then,' said Isabel after a moment's silence, 'she was only a child.' '*Except ye become as little children*,' quoted Mistress Margaret softly. 'You see, my Isabel, we are nothing more than children with God and His Blessed Mother. To say Hail Mary! Hail Mary! is the best way of telling her how much we love her. And then this string of beads is like our Lady's girdle, and her children love to finger it and whisper to her. And then we have our *Pater Nosters* too; and, all the while we are talking, she is showing us pictures of her dear Child, and we look at all the great things He did for us, one by one; and then we turn the page and begin again.'"

The American lady, converted from Transcendentalism forty years ago, and the English gentleman, converted from Anglicanism five or six years ago, have both hit on the same idea that the Rosary is the Blessed Virgin's girdle,

and that we are her little children fingering it fondly, and therefore keeping very close to our Mother.

Not only strangers outside the Church, but there are many within it who look on the Rosary with its string of beads as a sort of devotional toy, a mere pious device, excellent in its way as a help for simple, rude, uneducated people who cannot even read, but never meant for intellectual persons like themselves. Nay, it is a solid, scriptural devotion, useful for all, and fit to be our chief daily proof of filial loyalty to the Mother of God. Rohrbacher, at the 449th page of the 71st volume of his "History of the Church"—that is a tremendous number of volumes for a single work, but so I have it in my note—asks a string of questions which brings out very well the nature of the Rosary. "The sign of the Cross with which it begins—is it not the mark of a Christian? Is not the Apostles' Creed* the profession of faith which the martyrs recited at their baptism and under the axe of the executioner? Is not the Our Father the prayer which our Lord Himself deigned to teach us? Was not the Hail Mary pronounced by an Archangel in the name of Heaven, continued by the holy Mother of the Baptist whom the Holy Ghost

* These preliminary prayers do not belong to the Rosary, and are not necessary for the gaining of the Indulgences attached to it.

inspired to speak, and finished by the Church with whom that Spirit abides for ever? Is not the *Gloria Patri* the everlasting cry of praise that goes up to the Adorable Trinity from men and angels, from all times and from all places? Are not the fifteen mysteries that were proposed here for our meditation an abridgment of the Gospel? In truth I know of no practice better adapted for facilitating attention, piety, and devotion in prayer, the meditation of mind and heart. I say this for the learned who are ignorant of it, not for the ignorant who have learned it by experience."

Yes, the use of the Rosary beads is by no means to be confined to those who cannot read, who cannot use a prayer-book or other book of devotion. Even priests who are compelled (blessed compulsion!) to give a considerable portion of their day to the ritual and liturgy of the Church, must not reckon the Rosary among those private devotions which may be supposed to be satisfied by the devout recitation of the Divine Office. I will venture to emphasise this point by the authority of a priest who is dead nearly forty years. Yet some in Ireland, even outside the Society to which he belonged, remember still the holy and gifted Father Daniel Jones. To one of his younger brethren who had accused himself of some shortcoming with regard

to his way of saying the Rosary, the amiable saint took the trouble of giving the following counsel, and his penitent took the trouble of at once writing it down exactly. "I had occasion to write lately to Father Etheredge of the English Province, and I told him that I had never ceased to be grateful for a warning he gave me when I was ordained priest. 'Up to this,' he said, 'the Rosary was imposed on you as an obligation for various intentions, but now all that is satisfied for superabundantly by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and you will be tempted sometimes to be careless about saying the Rosary. Take great pains not to yield to the temptation.'"

It would be very well for us to stir ourselves up sometimes to perform this act of filial piety better by remembering all that the Rosary has been to countless generations of simple and devout souls since this devotion first became popular—all that it has been and is and will be in the Catholic homes (for instance) of Ireland and in holy convents there and everywhere. In country chapels on Sunday morning, waiting for the arrival of the priest, how piously the good women say their beads! In trouble and poverty how many have been comforted and strengthened by this act of piety which puts them in communication with the Queen of Heaven.

Before beginning to say their Rosary in private,

some make use of this little rhyme to stir up their fervour :—

> Mother! now I'll say my beads,
> For my soul some comfort needs;
> And what better can there be
> Than to raise our hearts to thee,
> Sweet Mother?

But sometimes it might be more effective to remind ourselves of the good company we are entering—how many souls very dear to God are at that moment employed as *we* are : good, humble folk such as I have just referred to, or nuns kneeling before the altar of their convent chapel or pacing slowly the convent alleys with beads in hand and heart in heaven. With these and with all who are similarly engaged in every corner of the Church, all the world over, let us join our hearts when we set about saying the Rosary.

A few more thoughts about its worth in general before descending to particulars.

The Rosary is, first of all, a prayer ; and all the encomiums that can be heaped upon prayer in general are true of *this* prayer. Every prayer, every cry of the soul to God, every expedient and artifice that can entice us to pray, to raise our hearts to God, to turn to God, to think of God, is good and holy and salutary and praise-worthy

But this prayer is, secondly, a *long* prayer. The goodness of a prayer does not indeed depend upon its length. "My Jesus, mercy!" is a good prayer. "O God, be merciful to me a sinner," is an excellent and efficacious prayer, producing often the blessed results attributed to it by our Lord Himself in the parable (if it be merely a parable) of the Pharisee and the Publican who went up into the Temple to pray. But perseverance in prayer is both desirable and difficult; and the Rosary helps us to persevere in prayer. The perseverance and piety exercised in so prolonged a prayer as the Rosary are in themselves more meritorious and are calculated to influence the soul more deeply and more permanently. No other form of prayer nearly so long has ever wound itself so closely round the hearts of the faithful, beguiling them into forgetfulness of its length, when recited habitually with fitting dispositions—so diversified is it, so interesting when we take fair pains to enter into its spirit, and withal, in spite of its repetitions, so little monotonous. Those repetitions are surely not "vain repetitions," for they are repetitions of the divinest prayers that human lips can utter, the prayers which Jesus Himself prescribed as a model prayer—"Thus shall ye pray"—and the prayer which the Holy Ghost dictated to the Archangel at the sublimest moment of the world's story.

With these best of vocal prayers mental prayer may be joined; for, while the beads glide through our fingers and the Hail Marys fall from our lips, our minds and hearts may be quietly turned towards one of the joyful, sorrowful, or glorious mysteries of our Lord's life, such as every prayer-book explains them to us.

Our Lord's Life? Yes, for in each of these scenes our Lord is the principal figure, as He must needs be, even when His Blessed Mother is beside Him. We call it the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin; but, like everything that is hers, it is much more her Divine Son's than her own. Even in her own Hail Mary the central word, the central thought, is Jesus, the blessed fruit of her womb. Ah! when that moment comes of which each Hail Mary reminds us—"pray for us, sinners, now and at the hour of our death"—when Death shall have come and after that the Judgment, and we shall stand before the Judgment-seat of that Jesus whom every Hail Mary blesses, we shall have no fear of the reproach that Heresy flings at us, as if forsooth in praying to the Mother we blasphemed or slighted the Son. The moments we shall have spent in saying the Rosary will not be the portion of our lives that we shall then regret.

The ordinary way of saying the Rosary is another of the innumerable triplets or trinities

that meet us everywhere. Though the *Psalterium Marianum* consists of 150 Hail Marys as King David's Psalter consists of 150 Psalms, the faithful divide it into three parts, each consisting of 50 Hail Marys, and the daily portion is limited to these five decades, each preceded by an Our Father and followed by a Glory be to the Father, &c.

Again, this three-fold division into Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries may, perhaps, be considered another of the many instances in which it seems possible to discover a special propriety in assigning one of the three to each of the Three Divine Persons in order. The plainest point in the present case is that the Sorrowful Mysteries, which come second, belong specially to the Second Person, the Man of Sorrows, Jesus Crucified. He, and He alone, is present in each of these mysteries. The Sorrows are all His own. Though, of course, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity is in all the others also, yet a certain attribution to Him of the Joyful Mysteries may be ventured, as the Archangel of the Annunciation represents the Eternal Father in His Embassy to the Immaculate Virgin; on the morning of the Nativity that Voice might well have been heard which spoke thirty years later: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased—hear ye Him!" Yes, though all

that is heard is the wailing of a helpless Babe. This attribution is justified also in the fifth mystery, where Jesus asks, "Must not I be about My Father's business?" Of course it is not pretended that this distribution of the Rosary Mysteries between the Three Divine Persons is more than an application of the yearning to find traces of the Trinity in the works of God. But even to advert to the idea in order to reject it keeps the mind alert and prostrates it before the fundamental mystery of mysteries, *Immortalis et Invisibilis*, God the Three in One.

Not by any arbitrary choice of private devotion, however, but by an authorised arrangement in force among the pious faithful and set forth in our prayer-books, the three divisions of the Rosary are definitely assigned to certain Sundays of each year and certain days of each week. As regards the Sundays, the year may be considered as consisting of Christmastide, Passiontide, and Eastertide; but we here give to those terms a much wider signification than they generally bear. From the first Sunday of Advent to the Sunday before Lent we meditate on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary; on all the Sundays of Lent on the Sorrowful Mysteries; on Easter Sunday, and all the Sundays after it till the ecclesiastical year begins again with Advent, we meditate on the Glorious Mysteries.

Finally, in each week each of the three parts of the Rosary is used twice over on the six week-days, so that the Joyful Mysteries are assigned to Monday and Thursday, the Sorrowful to Tuesday and Friday, the Glorious to Wednesday and Saturday. Fortunately in this arrangement the Sorrowful Mysteries fall to Friday, which is our weekly commemoration of the Passion; and Saturday, which is the Blessed Virgin's day, is the most suitable day for the Glorious Mysteries which end with our Lady's Coronation and the everlasting Sabbath of Heaven.

Some of the foregoing suggestions, even for those who will only think of them (as I said before) to reject them, may yet help occasionally to awaken our attention while saying the Rosary; they may serve as pegs to hang ideas on. But all of us would draw profit from some attempt to follow the method used generally, I think, by the Sisters of Mercy. Instead of breaking the flow of the Hail Marys by saying (for instance) "Blessed is the fruit of Thy Womb, Jesus, who was crowned with thorns," and so for the other mysteries, it is better at the beginning of each decade merely to name the mystery attached to it, with the briefest possible prayer for a corresponding virtue. Thus on Monday and Thursday throughout the year, and on the Sundays from the beginning of Advent to Lent, we remind our-

selves before the first decade of the first of the Joyful Mysteries: "The Annunciation. O Blessed Mother, obtain for me your love of humility." And as the beads slip through our fingers, we keep before our mind a picture of the scene of that mystery and bow at the name of Jesus as if we were present at it.

"Second Joyful Mystery: The Visitation. O Blessed Mother, obtain for me your love of fraternal charity.

"Third Joyful Mystery: The Nativity. O Blessed Mother, obtain for me your love of holy poverty.

"Fourth Joyful Mystery: The Purification. O Blessed Mother, obtain for me your love of holy purity.

"Fifth Joyful Mystery: The finding in the Temple. O Blessed Mother, obtain for me your love of holy obedience."

A little reflection will show us how each of the virtues suggested as the objects of our prayer springs from the mystery it is linked with; as in the last of them, the Finding in the Temple, which ends with that summary of our Lord's Hidden Life, *Erat subditus illis*, "He was subject to them," a lifetime of obedience. The Nativity, which shows the Incarnate Son of God born in a stable and cradled in a manger, suggests a love of poverty. In the Annunciation the lowliness

of the Handmaid of the Lord—*ecce Ancilla Domini*—suggests Humility; and more plainly still the Purification and Purity, the visit to St. Elizabeth and Charity, are linked with one another.

More arbitrary is the selection of graces to be prayed for with each decade of the Sorrowful Mysteries, which in the scheme I am following are these in order: 1st, a love of silence and resignation—"Not My will but Thine be done"; 2nd, mortification; 3rd, meekness; 4th, patience; 5th, the Crucifixion suggests a prayer for an ardent love of God. This last we might be reminded of by the words, "Greater love than this no man hath that a man lay down his life for his friend."

Finally, St. Paul's dictum (1 Cor. xv. 17), "If Christ has not arisen, your faith is vain," makes it natural to link the First Glorious Mystery with faith. "O Blessed Mother, obtain for me a lively faith." The Ascension, a confident hope—"I go to prepare a place for you." The Descent of the Holy Ghost, true zeal for the glory of God—for not till then did the Apostles go forth boldly to preach the Gospel. Last of all, the Assumption joins together again for ever the hearts of the Mother and the Son, and we naturally pray, "O Blessed Mother, obtain for me constant union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus," while her

Coronation suggests as our aspiration before the last of the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary, "O Blessed Virgin, obtain for me the grace of confidence in your prayers and the grace of final perseverance." Better, however, all through to say "for us," not merely "for me," and to include many or all in our prayer.

Even the effort, often unsuccessful, to make use of these or other *piae industriae* in our saying of the Rosary, will make our prayers more pleasing to Him whose "*sermocinatio est cum simplicibus.*" A minute or two would be well spent in ending with some such prayer as this: "O glorious Queen of Heaven, accept this Rosary which as a crown of roses we lay at your feet; and help us, O most gracious Lady, join your prayers with ours when we turn to God and pray: O God, whose only begotten Son by His Life, Death, and Resurrection has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that, meditating upon the mysteries of the most Holy Rosary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. O Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us."

Cardinal de Geissel's Sequence for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

NOWHERE else except in the pages of the magazine* which is so happy as to bear upon its forefront the inscription, "Devoted to the honour of the Blessed Virgin"—nowhere else would I dare to crave space not only for a long Latin hymn about that glorious privilege of Our Lady which is commemorated on the 8th of December, but also for two independent translations of the hymn. The hymn itself was written by Cardinal de Geissel, Archbishop of Cologne—the successor in 1845 of the illustrious Clement Augustus Droste von Vischering, who had borne so prominent a part in the perennial conflict between Church and State, between God and Cæsar. The Cardinal had previously been Bishop of Spires. I do not know how this beautiful hymn was first given to the public. I met with it first in the *Manuale Sacerdotum* of Father Joseph Schneider, S.J., who mentions in a note that the fourth stanza—"*Ante mundum te dilectam*," &c.—was sent to him by his Eminence

* *The Ave Maria.*

to be added to the hymn, which originally consisted of twelve stanzas only.

I.

Virgo virginum præclara,
Præter omnes Deo cara,
Dominatrix cœlitum,
Fac pie nos cantare,
Prædicare et amare,
Audi vota supplicum.

II.

Quis est dignus laude digna
Te laudare, O benigna
Virgo, fons carismatum!
Gratiis es tota plena,
Tota pulchra et serena,
Dei tabernaculum.

III.

O quam magna tibi fecit
Qui potens est et adjecit
Gratiam ad gratiam!
Qui cœlum terramque regit,
Matrem sibi te elegit,
Sponsam atque filiam

IV.

Ante mundum te dilectam!
Et præ omnibus electam,
Cœlorum delicias,
A peccato non redemit
Sed jam antea exemit
Emptorum primitias.

v.

Virgo vere benedicta,
Culpa nunquam es obstricta
Hocce in exilio;
Sine labe es concepta,
Magno lapsui erepta
Summo privilegio.

VI.

Contendebat certatura
Tunc cum gratia natura,
Gratia prævaluit;
A peccato præservatam
Immunemque illibatam
Mire te constituit.

VII.

Eva nova novæ legis,
Præelecta summi regis,
Consors ejus gloriæ;
Tu draconem domuisti,
Forti pede contrivisti
Victrix caput Satanæ.

VIII.

Semper fulgens munda stola,
Inter mundas munda sola,
Ascendisti sidera;
Super agmina sanctorum,
Super choros angelorum,
Sceptra geris domina.

IX.

Oras nunc a dextris Nati,
Jugo solvat ut peccati
Quos redemit sanguine;
Manus tuæ stillant dona,
Vitæ fac cœlestis bona
Et in nos defluere.

X.

Esto nobis maris stella,
Ne nos fluctuum procella
Navigantes obruat;
Ex quâ salus est exorta,
Esto nobis cœli porta
Quæ ad vitam pateat

XI.

Virgo clemens, Virgo pia,
Duc secura nos in via
Vitæ per exilium;
Nos, O Mater, hic tuere,
Olim istic fac videre
Te tuumque Filium.

XII

Fac, te duce, nos orare,
Vigilare et certare,
Certos tuæ gratiæ;
Funde nobis pia dona,
Custos, Mater, et patrona
Sanctæ sis ecclesiæ

XIII.

Fac nos stare fide vera,
Caritate, spe sincera,
Absque culpæ macula;
Gregem tibi sic dicatum,
Jam a patribus sacratum
Protegas in sæcula.

This seems to me to be one of the finest tributes that we possess of devotion to the Immaculate Conception.

I hope that the force and unction of Cardinal de Geissel's sonorous Latin have not entirely disappeared in the following version :—

I.

Virgin of virgins! thou who art
Of all the dearest to God's heart,
Thou glorious Queen of all the blest!
To thee our fervent hymns we raise,
Salute thee, bless thee, love, and praise:
Ah, hear the prayers to thee addressed!

II.

But who can worthy praises find
Wherewith to praise thee, Virgin kind,
Of highest gifts thou fount and spring?
All full art thou of graces rare,
Serene and gentle and all fair,
The tabernacle of the King.

III.

Oh, what great things the Mighty One
Hath unto thee, His handmaid, done,
Still adding richer grace to grace!
For He who ruleth earth and heaven,
To thee, below, above, hath given
A daughter's, spouse's, mother's place.

IV.

Belov'd ere yet the world was framed,
Thee out of all God chose and claimed,
And His delight in thee He made.
From sin not rescued as a prey,
But freed before in higher way—
First-fruits of those whose price was paid.

V.

O Virgin, truly blessed! stain
Did never on thy soul remain,
While here thou didst our exile bear.
In thy conception sinless all,
Delivered from the mighty fall
By privilege which none may share.

VI.

While Grace with Nature strove for thee,
Grace claimed thee all its own to be,
And victory remained with Grace;
It kept thee pure, without, within,
From e'en the faintest trace of sin,
And raised thee to thy wondrous place.

VII.

Of the New Law of love restored
New Eve, forechosen of the Lord,
The consort of His glorious state;
Thou hast the furious dragon quelled,
And with victorious foot hast held
Prostrate the fiend of hellish hate.

VIII.

In purest white thou still hast shone;
Amid the pure, thou pure alone
O'er all the stars hast sped thy way;
O'er all the saints of every clime,
O'er all the angel choirs sublime
Extends the sceptre of thy sway.

IX.

Now at thy Son's right hand on high,
Thy prayer doth for His mercy cry
Toward all the ransomed of His blood;
Gifts from thy hands pour down like rain—
Ah, for us, too, vouchsafe to gain
The heavenly life's eternal good!

X.

Star of the Sea to us be thou,
Lest, as this world's wild waves we plough,
We perish in the angry tide.
Through thee the Saviour has been given;
Be, then, for us the gate of heaven,
Which unto life may open wide.

XI.

Kind, clement Virgin! lead, we pray—
Lead us securely on our way,
  Until life's banishment is o'er.
Defend and guard us to the last;
Bring us to see, when time is past,
  Thee and thy Son for evermore.

XII.

Teach us to pray as thou hast prayed;
To watch, to combat undismayed,
  Whilst thy approving smile is seen.
Thy bounteous gifts upon us shower,
And ever be in suppliant power
  The Church's guardian, Mother, Queen!

XIII.

Make us in faith to persevere,
In charity and hope sincere,
  Unstained by sin's malignant stain
And may the flock whose pastors now
To thee their fond allegiance vow,
  For ever 'neath thy care remain!

The foregoing translation was made many years ago. It would not have been attempted if I had known that the hymn had already been turned very successfully into English; but it was only on the feast of St. Stanislaus, November 13, 1906, that a friend sent me a fly-leaf, printed apparently for private circulation, and dated

"Stonyhurst, December 8, 1856," just half a century ago. Of course the additional stanza which Cardinal de Geissel sent to Father Schneider in 1862 is not represented in this version, which therefore differs from mine in its numeration after the third stanza.

I.

Virgin of all virgins highest,
Virgin to God's Heart the nighest,
Queen enthroned above the sky!
May our bosoms love thee well,
May our tongues thy praises tell!
Hear, O hear thy suppliants' cry!

II

Who hath skill with praise condign
Thee to praise, O Maid benign,
Wellspring of the gifts of grace?
Thou of grace art wholly full,
Calmly bright, all beautiful,
And God's chosen dwelling-place.

III

Truly He, the mighty One,
Hath to thee great wonders done,—
Thee with grace on grace endows.
He who ruleth heaven and earth
Chooseth thee to give Him birth,
His own Mother, Daughter, Spouse.

IV.

Virgin blest in very deed,
Though this exile world thou tread,
Sin no bands can cast on thee;
Thou conceiv'd all clear of stain,
From the general ruin ta'en,
Privileged ineffably.

V.

Nature, loath to yield her prey,
Hasted eagerly that day
Hand to hand with Grace to strive:
Grace hath won, and thou within
Art all spotless kept from sin,—
Wonderful prerogative!

VI.

Thou, the New Law's better Eve,
Wast predestined to receive
Glory with th' Eternal King.
Mightily we've seen thee tread
On the vanquished dragon's head—
Peals of triumph round thee ring.

VII.

Stainless did thy robe endure;
'Mid the pure the only pure,
Thou hast climbed the starry height;
High above the saints in love,
High the angel choirs above,
Queen thou reign'st with sceptre bright.

VIII.

Now thou pray'st thy Son to break
Sin's hard yoke for sinners' sake,
Whom He suffered to redeem.
Graces from thy hands distil,
At thy instance blessings will
Down on us in torrents stream.

IX

Be to us the Ocean Star,
Lest, 'mid winds and waves at war,
Our inconstant bark be riven.
Dayspring, whence salvation rose,
When life's pilgrimage shall close,
Be to us the gate of heaven.

X.

Virgin meek and virgin mild,
While we tread this mazy wild,
Be thy safe protection shown.
Here defend us as we go;
There the happy sight bestow
Of thyself and of thy Son.

XI.

Sure of thy befriending aid,
We will in thy footsteps tread,
And will watch and pray and strive;
From on high thy favours pour,
Patron, Mother, evermore,
To Christ's Church protection give.

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XII.

Bid our hearts stand fast in Faith,
Hope, and Charity till death,
By no hideous sin-spot marred.
So Christ's fold be thy own dow'r
(As our fathers willed of yore),
Ever safe beneath thy guard.

I have not been able to discover the name of my rival translator. Father George R. Kingdon was, I think, prefect of studies at that time in Stonyhurst College.* He was one of the Oxford converts, and had the old Oxford proclivity for turning English verse into Latin and Latin verse into English. Probably it was he who translated the German Archbishop's poem as a timely act of devotion on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception half a century ago.

* I have since ascertained that Father Kingdon at that date was Professor of Dogmatic Theology in St. Beuno's College, North Wales. Of the Stonyhurst contemporary staff the most likely to be the translator of the Latin hymn was Father Albany Christie. It was he who translated from the German the popular hymn to the Sacred Heart, "To Jesus' Heart all Burning."

Jealous of God's Mother!

THERE are many, thank God, of those who have not the happiness of belonging outwardly to the Church of the "Hail Mary," and who, nevertheless, are tenderly loyal to the Mother of Jesus Our Lord. We may hope that many such are Catholics without knowing it. But, on the other hand, the spite and jealousy of the genuine Protestant mind towards the Mother of God betray themselves in ways which would be amusing if they were not distressing. For instance, the *Daily Express*, of Dublin, is a frankly Protestant journal. Some years ago it gave a very warm appreciation of the unusual merit of the first book of poems published by Katharine Tynan, and very judiciously it assigned the palm to her religious poems; but it added: "There is a mistake, by the way, in the first of them as to the historical facts of the Resurrection, which the author will do well to correct." The reviewer here alludes to the following stanza of "Louise de la Vallière," in which the penitent tries to keep away despair by reminding herself

how more than merciful the Redeemer had been to the penitent Magdalen :—

"And in Thy Resurrection's day of grace
First Thou didst shine before Thy Mother's face;
Next Thou didst seek in tender, strange disguise
Magdalen, weeping in the garden ways."

The poet, of course, knew that the first apparition recorded in Scripture is that to St. Mary Magdalen; for the interview between the Arisen Saviour and His Mother was too sacred to be thus recorded among the (as it were) public and official testimonies to the Resurrection. The ugly Protestant view would have us believe that Jesus never appeared to His Blessed Mother at all! The apparitions recorded were made to the persons who were appointed to be the public witnesses to the reality of the Resurrection. These were, so to say, official appearances. The apparition to the Blessed Mother was for her own sake. But tradition and Catholic instinct tell us that to the Mother of Sorrows this first joy of the Resurrection belonged.

St. Ignatius, in his plain, matter-of-fact "Points" for the meditation on the First Apparition, says that, though the Scriptures do not mention expressly this visit to Our Lady, they suppose us to have proper understanding, and to take this for granted : else we should expose

ourselves, he says, to that reproach, "Are you also without understanding?" Yet this Protestant journal, giving a very brief but very eulogistic notice of "Louise de la Vallière, and Other Poems," thinks it necessary to devote part of that brief notice to a protest against a supposition which St. Ignatius and every Catholic feels to be a Christian instinct and a mere matter of course. How can sincere believers in Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ allow themselves to be so meanly jealous of the honour paid by Him and by us to His Blessed Mother?

Three Hail Marys.

If I propose that we should make a little meditation on "Three Hail Marys," some will think I am going to recommend the pious custom which is so common among the faithful, the custom of saying every day three Hail Marys in honour of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in order to obtain the gift of purity. Marvels of grace have been wrought in countless souls, and are wrought every day that passes, through this blessed practice, which cannot be too strongly urged upon the young with all the dangers of life before them or around them. What a sweet and sanctifying influence this little practice must have when kept up perseveringly for years, on through all our years! Nay, many stories are told of persons brought back to virtue after years of sin, who with a strange fidelity had kept up in the midst of a sinful life this one little habit of saying three Hail Marys daily.

The three Hail Marys, however, which we are going to think over now, are not thus repeated together in a few seconds, but are separated by

wide intervals of years. The first of the three is the very first Hail Mary that our lips ever pronounced; the second is the Hail Mary that we shall say with special deliberation, attention and fervour, after we have finished our present meditation; and the third is the last Hail Mary that will be murmured by us, as we hope, on our deathbed, with faith and devotion, very close to the last breath of our mortal life.

As for the first of these, we can only know that there must have been a first Hail Mary. For one who is drawn by a marvellous grace into the Catholic Church, in mature years it must be a solemn moment when he first uses this little prayer as a sign that he has become, in heart at least, a child of the true Church whose truth is proved by the very fact that she is the Church of the "Hail Mary." For instance, we know the time and place of the first Hail Mary said as a formal and deliberate act of devotion by Henry Edward Manning. In an autobiographical note Cardinal Manning related the circumstances as follows:—

"In the month of March, 1851, I went into the City and executed the resignation of my office and benefice before a public notary; and then I returned over Blackfriars Bridge and went into St. George's, and knelt before the Blessed Sacrament. It was then and there that I said

my first Hail Mary "—namely, in St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, the beautiful Church built for Father Thomas Doyle by the great architect, Pugin, one of the first trophies of the new life infused into the Catholic Church in England about the middle of the nineteenth century.

How many Hail Marys the great Convert said in the forty years of Catholic life that followed that first Hail Mary! For us, however, who were born into the Catholic Church by holy Baptism a few hours after we were born into this world of human life, the first Hail Mary was taught to us word by word, as we knelt by our mother's knee, or were clasped in our mother's arms. It was a momentous day for us when our childish lips were first able to pronounce the syllables that make up that little prayer, when we had learnt the words off by heart and had fixed them in our hearts. Thanks be to God, the names of Jesus and Mary were familiar to us from the first; and the name of Jesus is in the very heart of the Hail Mary. How quickly did the meaning of all the words sink into the mind of the child? At any rate we all know that never was there the slightest danger of the exaggerations and errors that many misguided people outside the Catholic Church pretend to fear for us. Never did we think of the Blessed Virgin as more than the highest and purest of creatures, the Virgin Mother

of the Incarnate God. Our childish minds instinctively grasped the substance of the theology embodied, for instance, in John Henry Newman's discourse, "The Glories of Mary for the sake of her Son." Thanks be to God, then, for the thousands and thousands of Hail Marys that we have said since our first Hail Mary—often no doubt with little thought, by a blessedly mechanical routine, but sometimes with fuller advertence, as will be the case, I hope, with our next Hail Mary.

In repeating this second of the Three Hail Marys let us try to realise the sublimity of the privilege that we exercise in addressing thus the Queen of Heaven and imploring her help. As in the Mass the priest before the *Pater Noster* uses the phrase *audemus dicere*, "we dare to say Our Father," so is it an audacious thing for such worms as *we* are to speak to God's Mother, to call her by her name, to ask her to pray for us, not only now, but to hold us in remembrance and to pray for us at the hour of our death. Let us pause sometimes over each word of the Hail Mary and try to feel as we ought to feel, or at least would desire to feel, in speaking to the Immaculate Queen of Heaven. The first part is praise, the second part is petition. Is it not a daring act of faith to believe that the Mother of Jesus can care for our praise, or can listen to

our petitions? Yes, it is amazing; but that amazement is only another phase of the wonder that broke out of old in the question: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" What are we, poor mortals, that God bears us in mind so lovingly and lets the heavenly citizens and their Queen be mindful of us and concerned about us? Therefore we bestow upon the Blessed Virgin the titles of honour and the praises that the Archangel Gabriel and the Mother of the Baptist bestowed upon her; and we ask her to pray for us poor sinners now and at the hour of our death. *Now*, first of all, for this passing moment is all that is really at our disposal. The past cannot be recalled, the future cannot be forestalled. This present moment, this "now," will never again be in my power to use or lose or abuse. *Le moment où je parle est déjà loin de moi.* Holy Mary, pray for me *now*.

But, while we say that the present only is certain and that the future is uncertain, there is one moment of the future that is certain also; and this is the moment of death. That moment is surely before us. Where shall it find us, and when and how? In what state? Ready to go? or unprepared, taken by surprise in spite of so many warnings? May we be then as calm and content as the good poor people of County Limerick, and probably other parts of Ireland;

but it was of the Limerick people I was told that if you visit them on their lingering deathbeds and ask how they are, they will answer cheerfully, "Right well, thank God, and waiting for the best day." *The best day!* That is their name for the day of death. And it will be our best day if the Blessed Virgin prays for us, as every day and many times in every day we implore her to do. So shall we continue to implore of her, on to our last Hail Mary. How shall that last Hail Mary be said? Will death give us full warning, and shall we be aware that we are very near the end? Or shall we be taken suddenly away? Or shall death be preceded by a long or short interval of helplessness and unconsciousness, so that we shall for all spiritual purposes be dead long before the actual moment of death? Is any dying one ever so conscious that the end has come for him that he is able to change the familiar words, and adapt them to the actual circumstances? "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me a poor sinner, now, this moment; for this is indeed the hour of my death—and this is my last Hail Mary on earth, to be followed soon, I hope, by my first Hail Mary in heaven."

Mother and Martyr.

I DO not remember that any spiritual writer has dwelt on a certain similarity existing between two of the glorious functions fulfilled by the Blessed Virgin Mary with regard to the work of the world's redemption. This similarity is indicated in two consecrated phrases which the Church makes use of to describe Our Lady's two-fold dignity of Mother of God and Queen of Martyrs—*Mater et Martyr.*

The first of these phrases occurs in the *Gradual* of one of the votive Masses of the Blessed Virgin, perhaps borrowed from some saint: *Beata ac venerabilis es, Virgo Maria, quæ sine tactu pudoris inventa es Mater Salvatoris*—"Blessed and venerable art thou, O Virgin Mary, who without the touch of shame wast found to be the Mother of the Redeemer." That "wast found" points to the *inventa est* of St. Matthew i. 18; and this expression renders more natural, and therefore more wonderful, the ingenious anagram which transposes the letters of the Archangel's greeting—*Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*—into these curiously kindred words, letter for

letter, neither more nor less: *Deipara inventa sum, ergo Immaculata*—"I am the Mother of God, therefore Immaculate."

The other parallel phrase forms the *Communion* of the Mass of the Seven Dolours: *Felices sensus Beatæ Mariæ Virginis, qui sine morte meruerunt martyrii palmam sub Cruce Domini*—"Happy were the Blessed Virgin Mary's senses, which without death merited the palm of martyrdom under the Cross of the Lord." Her senses and feelings—sight, hearing, touch, and all the other avenues by which physical pain rushes in upon the soul; all that she who stood beside the Cross saw to distress her; all that she heard, all that she felt, not merely in her heart, but by sympathy in every fibre of her sensitive frame—all these went to form the Blessed Virgin's share in the Passion of her Divine Son. She sought relief from no anæsthetic, even such as the strong soul can discover for itself; but rather, like Jesus in the Garden, she willed to suffer in her soul all that He endured in soul and body. It was the most painful of deaths, without the exhaustion, the passing away, the insensibility, the repose of death. Mary would have suffered far less if she could have died with Jesus.

Thus was the Mother of God a martyr—which means a witness unto death—and yet *sine morte*, just as she had become a mother *sine tactu*

pudoris : a mother without the tribulation of the flesh and other penalties that attend maternity for all the daughters of Eve except her, the sole Virgin Mother ; a martyr without the physical horrors from which her Crucified Son would keep her virginal body safe, though He spared not His own.

Pray for us, O Mother of God, O Queen of Martyrs !

Mater Admirabilis.*

A Novice's Sermon to his Fellow-Novices about their Blessed Mother.

After all, it is not easy to get to heaven, my Brothers. Many things stand in our way. The world, the flesh, and the devil are hard, and very hard, to conquer. The concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life are terrible foes to fight against. The powers of darkness are very cunning, very stubborn, very subtle, very strong. We have a fierce war to wage, all our lives long. No treaty of peace, no truce, no breathing-space—the battle always raging, and defeat and death looming over us often. Even the mere continual strain itself—the having to keep up the contest ever, never blenching, never flinching an inch—wastes our strength and dulls our spirit sadly. What should become of us if we were fighting all

* This is given exactly as it was spoken as a literary and devotional exercise in the refectory of a Jesuit Novitiate, on the 16th of August, 1853, seven years before my ordination. No attempt is made to cut off exuberant epithets, as the youthfulness of the tone will not be distasteful to youthful readers, and perhaps some others.

alone? But—blessed be the mercy of God!—we have *something* to cheer us in the heat of the struggle. Mary is our strong Helper through all; our hope is in the prayers and patronage of the ever-glorious Virgin. When we are growing disheartened, when our vigour is failing, when we are sorely tempted to fling our arms aside and take to cowardly flight—one glimpse of Mary's serene smile nerves our arm, and braces our courage, and gives us fresh heart, and we fight on bravely again. Yes, Mary is our hope and our sweetest comfort, for Mary is our Mother, and Mary is Mother of God.

But is there any cold, unfilial soul among us that lacks in her regard the due measure of love and worship? Oh! God forbid, my Brothers. No, no! Here at least, Mary is Queen and served with the generous, unstinted service of loyal, loving hearts. We are hers on many titles. For which of us, looking back, cannot trace her benignant influence along all the stream of his life, gilding its surface over as with luminous ripples of sunshine? But to our allegiance the Queen of the Society of Jesus has a much more special right. Perhaps, too, some of us have even to thank this dear Mother for being where we are, safe in this holy and happy nook, guided into the very surest road to the City of God, and helped and cheered on our journey thither with

unwearied tenderness and watchful skill; hedged round with blessed restraints and safeguards, which, excluding sloth and vague, self-willed caprice, make us live full days in the gay liberty of holy Obedience; screened securely against all our foes, except alas! our first and fiercest, Self; the devil able only to scowl at us from a distance, as it were, in impotent rage, and the world shut out utterly with all its pleasures and all its cares—cares so cruelly harassing, so inexorably engrossing—pleasures so brief, so bad, so unsatisfying, yet ah! so terribly seducing; God's graces, all the while, His best and rarest, showered down upon us ceaselessly, and, along with these various aids and countless others, traditions of the Saints and heroes who were once what we are, shaming even *us*, by the memory of the great things that they did and suffered, into humble bravery of purpose to try with God's help to be not too ridiculously unworthy of such splendid lineage. Oh! happy we, dear Brothers, the special favourites of God's kind providence—pet lambs in the flock of the Good Shepherd. *Unam petii a Domino, hanc requiram, ut inhabitem in domo Domini omnibus diebus vitae meae, ut videam voluptatem Domini et visitem templum ejus* (Ps. xxvi. 4).—"One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

that I may see the delight of the Lord and may visit His temple."

And shall we, then, forget her to whom we owe so much of all this happiness and all this honour? Ah! we could not, if we would, be unmindful or ungrateful *here*. The very spirit of the place would not suffer us. Here Mary must needs be ever on our lips and in our hearts, for here her beautiful presence haunts us everywhere and always. Thus, to remind you of some of these graceful artifices for enticing us into thinking incessantly of our heavenly Mother, the image of the *Regina Novitiorum Societatis Jesu* is the first to catch our eye in coming in, the last to greet us going out. The same motherly face smiles down at us meekly from more than one niche and picture frame. Our willing lips, also, are taught to delight in murmuring Hail Marys all day long, whether strung together into Rosaries or sown thickly throughout our day at the beginning and end of almost every duty. Then, again, that magnificent mingling of supplication and praise, so sublime in its direct simplicity—that prayer or string of prayers, in which the Church has, for century upon century, given vent to the devotion that throbs within her mighty heart—the beautiful Litany of Loretto—how often each day do we invoke our Queen under all that variety of titles which

piety has, with such exhaustless ingenuity, devised, and with such affectionate prodigality lavished upon her! And you remember, too, how, when Mary's own sweet month came round, we used this her canonised Litany as a golden thread to guide us through the vast, bewildering labyrinth of her graces and her glories; whilst to me it fell, under the inspiration of the title *Mater Admirabilis*, to try and set Mary before you as the most admirable wonder of God. And now that the very gayest of our Lady's Festivals has but just gladdened the Church of God, the whole world over, rejoicing all Catholic hearts with its own bright and beautiful spirit, I know well you will be nothing loth to listen to the same old story once again; for never, surely, can Mary's praise grow tiresome to *you*, dear Brothers.

Time works wonders, and man, his powers developed by time and ripened by patient experience, has wrought wonders manifold. Yet what, after all, are the most stupendous of man's achievements save petty combinations of the materials which God has given ready-made into his hands, only wonderful to the short-sighted pride of human ignorance? God, God alone, is the true Thaumaturgus—God is the sole great Wonder-worker. For the glorious Universe is God's with all its hosts of suns and stars. Nay, this poor little planet of ours—does it not stun

the most gigantic intellect of the sons of men to ponder even on some tiny fragment of its wonders? But look at Nature in her grander aspects. Magnificent mountain ranges, forests, rivers, seas, snow-storms and the strong winds—the infinite varieties of flowers, plants, trees—the multitudinous tribes of living things that range the earth or dwell in the cold heart of the waters: from all creation, inanimate and irrational, rings up to the Maker one mighty inarticulate cry, *God alone is great and the Doer of great things.*

But for this voiceless *Te Deum* words were wanted. Then God said: "Let Us make man to Our image and likeness;" and God set man over all the visible works of His hands. But men, with all their splendid endowments of nature and of grace, are not yet like unto the Angels; and God made the Angels, too. Have we yet reached the highest height of created greatness, beyond which dwelleth only the Three in unity of light inaccessible? No, we are still far below the throne of her who reigns over all the realms of nature, grace, and glory, of her who is the Queen of men and angels—Mary.

But why this rapid upward glance along the rising scale of God's creations? In order to get a notion of Mary's admirable pre-eminence from the interminable road we have to travel before coming even within sight of her; for Mary is

far above them, far beyond them all. Rightly, then, is Mary styled "Mother most Admirable," and rightly may those words of Wisdom (viii. 11) be put into her mouth: *In conspectu potentium admirabilis ero, et facies principum mirabuntur.*— "In the sight of the mighty I shall be wonderful, and the faces of princes shall wonder at me."

Men often admire at second-hand. "This must be a most admirable painting: for such a one pronounces it admirable, and *he* is an excellent judge." Let us in all reverence thus form a judgment of the Great Master's most admirable masterpiece. What does God Himself think of Mary? What place does Mary hold in the Infinite Mind? Looking forward out of the depths of the Eternal Years, the Three in One singled out Mary for the Mother of the Word Incarnate. The Eternal Father elected her for His dearest Daughter, His First-born among creatures, the Queen and crown of all His fair creations. The Eternal Son chose to be *her* Son, to take flesh in her virginal womb, to be her little Babe in Bethlehem, to nestle in her arms, to be fed at her breast, to slumber on her lap, to grow up under her adoring gaze, tenderly ruled and guarded, to obey her and the meek old man, Joseph, for thirty out of His three-and-thirty years, sharing all the toil and hardship of their lowly lot. And the Third Adorable Person

selected Mary out of all the daughters of men to be His chaste spouse, "and the virtue of the Most High overshadowed her, and she conceived of the Holy Ghost." Now what manner of being should *she* be who was thus the eternal choice of the Adorable Trinity, the Almighty, the All-wise, the All-good? First of all, was it not at least meet that never for one moment, nor even before ever moments were, should she who was to be the Mother of God be aught else than the object of God's sweetest, most intense complacencies? It was indeed but meet that it should be so; and so it was. Sin had never anything to do with Mary, but simply to pass her by. By the most singularly admirable of privileges, by the most triumphant exercise of Christ's redeeming grace, this sole sinless daughter of Eve was conceived Immaculate.

All the rest accords with this beginning. As Mary was admirable before her birth, so was she admirable more and more each year and day and minute that she lived. Admirable in her vowed virginity, so new and magnanimous in a Hebrew maiden—admirable, thrice admirable in the Divine Maternity and in all her relations, so ineffably intimate and tender, with the Incarnate God. Admirable in her griefs no less than in her glories—admirable for her virtues more than for her privileges—admirable in all her life and

admirable in her death, if that can be called death which was but a fragrant momentary slumber, out of which the pomp and pageant of the Assumption were at once to wake her.

It is over. Mary's lifelong martyrdom of patience, her fifteen years of pining absence after her Son's departure, are at an end at last. The Mother has joined her Son once more. Jesus has taken Mary to Himself. Let us with hushed hearts pause here awhile and think within ourselves what Mary must be *now*. We saw how she began. In natural gifts, first among all creatures, and no one second; in the order of grace, most perfect of all that have been or that shall be—not that the Creator could not give more, but that creature could not take more.

> So perfect, so pure, and of gifts such a store
> That even Omnipotence will not do more.*

What beauty, what wisdom, what power, what majestic grasp of intellect! Nature has done her uttermost for her. But the good of a single grace is, according to St. Thomas, greater than the natural good of the entire Universe. What, then, is Mary?—beginning with immeasurably larger stock of grace than the hoary-headed saint ends with after fighting out the terrible fight

* Cardinal Newman.

for his century of weary years, and that original store increasing inconceivably through Mary's perfect correspondence in every second of those three-score years and three during which God was good enough to spare His Beloved out of heaven, that she might consecrate the earth for ever with the holiness and beauty of her most queenly presence. Oh! ponder with awe on the exuberant rapidity of the Blessed Virgin's growth in grace and merit in God's sight from the first great act of perfect love of her Immaculate Heart till that time of transcendent merit when "there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother," and when a miracle of strength and resignation was needed to hinder Mary's broken heart from being her death; and thence on till that last happy moment when she sweetly died away of love. If we could measure the very uttermost extent of God's communicable excellencies, we might then have some standard for measuring Mary's greatness; for the high spring-tide of Grace Divine rushed in upon her with its fullest flood, and overflowed even her capacious soul.

But for Mary, too, the time of meriting has ceased at length. She has lived and died, and been assumed into the Kingdom of her Son, Who has enthroned and crowned her there, its Queen. *Regina coeli, laetare.* But now that she is wrapped up into the everlasting blessedness of heaven, is

hers a merely *passive* glory, as it were? No, she acts still; and her beneficent activity will not let us forget that we on earth have an Admirable Mother in heaven. And in nothing is Mary more admirable than in her power; for she is omnipotent with the meek omnipotence of a mother's prayer. What wonders, far beyond knowing, farther beyond telling, has this Admirable Mother wrought on earth and in heaven! What wonders is she every day working in her children and for them! Just think how many of the saints are specially Mary's saints. Look at our own most glorious brotherhood of saints—Ignatius, Xavier, Borgia, Francis Regis, Francis Jerome, and then those bright young saints, angels rather than saints, Stanislaus, Aloysius, *Berchmans.* (Forgive the too fond devotion that dares to slip in that dear Venerable name among the canonised.*) How much, how much has Mary done for everyone of these our Fathers and our Brothers! and oh, how lovingly they are, this minute, praising and thanking her for all, mingling doubtless with their thanks and praises many an earnest prayer to her for us. Yes, we, too, shall yet (please God!) be saints with them and saints through Mary.

But Mary's *Sinners*—ah! they, best of all, best of all, show that she is in very truth an Admirable

* Beatified and canonised since then.

Mother. For Mary the Sinless is the saving Refuge of Sinners. Among them lies her merciful mission. To foil the Tempter when sure of his prey, to snatch the lost sinner out of the devil's greedy clutches, to bring the poor despairing wretch to God—that is Mary's special forte, her favourite work, her own peculiar province. They tell us of a king of the old pagan times, who, to repeople the desolate streets of his capital which some bloody struggle had depopulated, bethought himself of erecting a magnificent temple to Diana, in order that criminals, seeking an asylum from the pursuer within the shadow of her shrine, might in time sober down into honest citizens, and so swell the thinned ranks of his subjects. To some such merciful stratagem would the King of the Heavenly Jerusalem seem to have resorted to fill up the vacant places which the apostate Angels left behind them in the courts of His fair city. Mary's altar is the shrine of safety to which the hunted fugitive pants for refuge at the last. Many an outlaw from God, under the ban of heaven, has, in his utter hopelessness, been caught by Mary's compassionate gaze; and Mary has saved the perishing outcast after all, and sent him to be one among the rapturous crowds that throng the New Jerusalem.

We have now gone together, dear Brothers, over some of the more prominently admirable

aspects of Our Lady's life and character, naming them rather than describing them, and stealing at the end one look of wistful love up to her glorious throne in heaven. We have had, of course, to glance but hastily, lightly, where one would fain gaze lovingly and long. Yet even this glimpse must needs have suggested motives for admiration the most intense and for the tenderest love.

Love—love! Aye, you see it comes to that at last. I have tried hard to keep to admiration, for it was agreed at the beginning that our praises were to be confined to the *Mater Admirabilis*. But does not the Church herself, with exquisite feeling, call Our Lady amiable and admirable in one breath, as if all admiration of our Admirable Mother should quickly melt away into love? And indeed in the strict idea of mere admiration there is some tinge of fear, of distant, unfamiliar awe, hardly in keeping with that childlike, trustful tenderness which is the heart's first spontaneous feeling when it thinks of Mary—Mary that kindest and most affectionate of mothers, that perfect image of all that is graceful and amiable and soothing and beautiful, in whom is nothing austere or terrible, but all grace and sweet attractiveness and tender pity. How true is that fine saying of Canova's: "There is no sublimity without the Catholic religion, and no

beauty without the Madonna." Oh! the heavenly beauty of the one true Catholic Church, and the grand and holy faith she proposes to us, and the sweet Mother she gives us.

And now let us end by turning to this marvellous Mother herself, so amiable, so admirable, and telling her once again what we have told her before so often, that, with God's blessing and her own, we will, till death, be her children faithful and dutiful, all of us. *Till death*, did I say? Till death, and for eternities of bliss unutterable beyond it. In heaven, after kind death has joined us, we shall but begin to be really Mary's children, cherished and ah! so lovingly caressed: here in this dying life we are banished exiles only, pining after our Home which is far away. Home—home! Aye, heaven is the only Home. Heaven is our true and real Home: for our brothers and sisters, the Saints, are there, and our own meek and gentle Mother is there, and Thou, *Our Father, Who art in heaven.* Mary, our Mother, sweetest and best of mothers, ah! take us home. We are out here in the cold and the dark, shivering, hungry, and naked. Open to us, let us in. O Mother! take us home. You are our dear Mother, and you are in heaven, and heaven is our home; we are orphans here without you, poor, homeless, motherless orphans—O Mother! take us home. Yes, dearest Mother,

you *will*. We trust to you that you will bring us all home to yourself at last, each in God's own good time—safe home to that happy home where we shall still indeed call you our Admirable Mother, as we are calling you to-day, but where we shall have no longer any need to cry, as we do now, "O Mother most admirable! pray for us."

The Blessed Virgin the St. Monica of all Christians.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN never used his marvellous powers of thought and language more effectively than during what he called his campaign in Ireland. His lectures on "University Education" in the Rotunda, his literary papers in the *Catholic University Gazette*, his sermons in the University Church that he built in St. Stephen's Green, display, according to the nature of their subjects, eloquence, grace and subtlety in a high degree. On a certain fourth of May in the middle of the fifties—it was indeed May 4, 1856—he began thus in his newly-erected pulpit :—

"This day we celebrate one of the most remarkable feasts in the Calendar. We commemorate a saint who gained the heavenly crown by prayers and tears, by sleepless nights and weary wanderings, but not in the administration of any high office in the Church, not in the fulfilment of some great resolution or special counsel ; not as a teacher, evangelist, reformer, or champion of the faith ; not as a bishop of the

flock or temporal governor; not by eloquence, by wisdom, or by controversial success; not in the way of any other saint whom we invoke in the circle of the year; but as a mother seeking and gaining by her penances the conversion of her son. It was for no ordinary son that she prayed, and it was no ordinary supplication by which she gained Him. When a holy man saw its vehemence ere it was successful, he said to her: 'Go in peace: the child of such prayers cannot perish.' The prediction was fulfilled beyond its letter; not only was that young man converted, but after his conversion he became a saint; not only a saint, but a doctor also, and instructed many unto justice. St. Augustine was the son for whom she prayed; and, if he has been a luminary for all ages of the Church since, many thanks do we owe to his mother, St. Monica, who, having borne him in the flesh, travailed for him in the spirit."

It is with difficulty that I refrain from going further with this exquisite discourse on "the Intellect the Instrument of Religious Training." But I am not reminding you of St. Monica and her instructive story for her own sake, but because I see in her a type of one phase of the relations of our Blessed Lady with the great Christian family, the Church of her Divine Son. The Blessed Virgin is the St. Monica of all

Christians, deserving from each of us far more than the love and gratitude and confidence that St. Monica deserved and gained from the generous heart and magnificent mind of St. Augustine.

The two mothers have this in common, that each derives her glory from her Son. "Mary of whom was born Jesus." This fragment of an inspired text is foundation deep enough and broad enough and strong enough to sustain the vast superstructure of praise and reverence built upon it by the piety of Christian hearts. Mary is the Mother of Jesus, and Jesus is God. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us."

St. Monica likewise in her due measure is known to us and loved and honoured by us as the mother of St. Augustine, who in his turn attributed all that was good in him to St. Monica. *Cujus meriti credo esse omne quod vivo.* "To her (says this great saint and doctor of the Church), to her belongs the merit of all the life, all the good that is in me, all that I am."

There was exquisite taste—if we may use so human a word in reference to a thing so divine as the liturgy of the Mass—there was exquisite taste shown in the selection of the Gospel of the Mass on the feast of St. Monica. It sets before us a scene which is a very pathetic revelation of the tenderness of the Heart of Jesus. St. Luke describes it in his seventh chapter: how, "as

Jesus drew near the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried forth, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." St. Augustine, too, may be considered in this context the only son of his widowed mother, so completely is Navigius lost and absorbed in his illustrious brother. Herein the Blessed Virgin is like to the widow of Naim and St. Monica, but only as Mother of Jesus, not as by adoption mother of us all. And, on the other hand, it is only under this latter aspect, as the Mother of us all, that she bears a likeness to St. Monica during the long years of patient, persevering prayers and tears, when, with all the importunity of a mother's much enduring love, she was besieging heaven for the conversion of her gifted son. Indeed she imitated well the patience of our Blessed Mother in waiting for the conversion of many a sinner. When all her efforts seemed to have failed, when Augustine broke away from the mute reproach of her presence and fled by stealth to Italy—even then Monica did not despair. She made what must have been the hardest sacrifices for the sake of one who was soon to prove himself worthy of it all; but *that* only her motherly heart could hope for or foresee. She determined to break up her home, to leave her native land, and to pursue the fugitive, though she hardly knew whither he had gone.

What is the parallel passage to this in the story of the Immaculate Mother? We might find it, perhaps, in that unrecorded crisis in the life of our Blessed Lady when the fear that had constantly haunted her is realised at last, and Jesus leaves her for ever in order to be about His Father's business, never again to be the same that He has been to His Blessed Mother. With a yearning pang she sees Him depart, and follows Him henceforth only in spirit, nor will she join Him again till she is summoned to His cruel deathbed to suffer a mother's part in His shame and pain.

It is better, however, to link Mary and Monica together by their common likeness to the unnamed widow of Naim. St. Augustine himself makes this comparison for his mother at the beginning of the 6th Book of his "Confessions"; and, on the other hand, some holy writer has imagined that one of the reasons why Jesus was so deeply affected by the grief of this poor desolate woman following her only son to the grave was because He saw in her an image of what His own Mother would be when He, bowing His head in death, would leave her standing desolate beside the Cross.

A milder Calvary was St. Monica's at Ostia, where her mortal sickness fell upon her on their way back to Africa. Milder and more easy, for *she* did not see her son die, but saw him brought

back to life, when God restored him also to his mother. She left him a fervent believer in Christ Jesus, a devoted child of His Church. She was now doubly his mother, as she is called in the Matins of her feast. *Monica, sancti Augustini dupliciter mater, quia eum et mundo et coelo peperit.* She brought him forth into the life of this world, and she brought him forth unto the life eternal. And so she might sing her *Nunc Dimittis* and leave this world with the calmness of resignation, and even with the eagerness of joy.

"Ah, could thy grave at home in Carthage be!"
"Care not for that, but lay me where I fall:
Everywhere heard will be the judgment-call,
But at God's altar oh! remember me."
Thus Monica, and died in Italy.

She died in exile, far away from her beloved home by the Libyan Sea. In exile. But is not life itself an exile for all of us: *exules filii Hevae?* Rather her exile ended there, and she was welcomed home *in patria*, where, after many glorious labours, after many magnificent writings which still instruct God's Church, St. Augustine joined her, and mother and son will never more be parted. They are never separated in the devotion of the faithful.

Art, as in the famous picture by Ary Scheffer, always sets them before us together. The Collect

of the Mass of St. Monica, repeated seven times through the office of her feast, belongs to the son almost as much as to the mother.

"O God, consoler of those who mourn and salvation of those who hope in Thee, who didst mercifully receive the pious tears of Blessed Monica for the conversion of her son, Augustine, grant to us through the intercession of both to bewail our sins and to find mercy in Thy grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Yes, through the infinite merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the prayers of His Blessed Mother. We must not end with Monica and Augustine, but with another Mother and another Son. For the subject of our meditation is not St. Monica herself, but St. Monica as a type of the Blessed Virgin.

When considered as Mother of Him who is "First-born of many brethren," Mary Immaculate is the St. Monica of all true Christians. May she be such a mother to us, or rather may we be to her true children, loving her ardently, praying to her constantly, and above all serving faithfully her Divine Son, so that at our death He may be able to work a greater miracle of mercy than that recorded in the Gospel scene at the gate of Naim—restoring the son to the mother—by passing on us a favourable judgment which will place us for ever among the happy children of Mary in heaven.

The Blessed Virgin a Note of the Church.

FAITH is a supernatural gift and grace; and the limits and mutual relations of nature and grace are hard to define; yet it seems strange how anyone who believes Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the Son of Mary can have any difficulty in assigning to the Blessed Virgin the place and the prerogatives that the Catholic Church assigns to her. It is strange indeed and unreasonable that men should be found claiming the name of Christians, disciples of Christ, and yet refusing to honour her whom Christ honoured by making her His Mother—jealous of every feeble tribute paid to her greatness and goodness; carping at every word of praise which the freedom and simplicity of filial affection addresses to her, fearful of going too far, but quite indifferent (God forgive them!) as to error in the less generous direction—speaking of the Blessed Mother of God coldly and under protest, and (when they venture to carry their principles to the full length) not only coldly, but contemp-

tuously, blasphemously. And yet, however startling to us this unmanly disloyalty to the glorious Queen of Heaven, however sorrowful and distressing when it seems to be (if it ever can be) candid and sincere, and however hateful and maddening when it dares to be profane or impertinent—nevertheless, as it must needs be that scandals come, and as heresy will to the end revolt against God's Church, it is a certain consolation for our faith that among the marks and tokens of the true Church should be one so plain as this, that amongst the distinctive tenets of heresy in all its changing forms should be an error so readily detected as an error by the truthful and the generous and the pure, an error so unchivalrous, so unfilial, so utterly revolting to mere reason itself and to all human feeling, as that which would harshly deny to the Mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and our God that place of honour which the Catholic Church gives to her in the Heart of her Divine Lord in heaven, and in the hearts of her children on earth. We know well—and they may know well who blame us for feeling and acting as we do towards the Blessed Virgin—we know well and they know well how shallow is their pretence of wishing thus to guard against encroachment on the sovereign rights of God, our Creator, Redeemer, Eternal Father, Almighty Lord. As if homage paid to the

lowly Handmaid of the Lord could be an encroachment on that divine Lord's infinite and incommunicable attributes! As if all that is done for her were not done in obedience to the edict of the Great King Himself. "Thus shall she be honoured whom the Lord God hath a mind to honour!"—as if all that is hers were not the gift of His bounty, and as if she were or could be elevated independently of her Son, in opposition to her Son, and not simply as the Mother of Jesus, as the highest and purest and most perfect of God's creatures, the supreme trophy of His infinite wisdom, His infinite goodness, His infinite power; as if her own statement were untrue and her own prophecy were not to be fulfilled—"He that is mighty hath done great things to Me; behold from henceforth all nations shall call Me blessed." Thanks be to God, we her loving children and loving children of the Catholic Church—we, and not they, the cold, critical protesters against the honour paid to Mary—were at that moment of inspiration before the prophetic mind of the Blessed Virgin, as we alone call her always in fulfilment of her prophecy.

But is there not danger of excess? Alas, *that* is not the reproach we feel bound to bring against ourselves. Many of us might wish that for us these fears were better founded. Nay, even for the simplest and rudest—the poor simple woman

saynig her beads in some country chapel is no more likely to be guilty of idolatry than St. Elizabeth was when she, the mother of the Precursor, bowed down before the Mother of the Messiah, saying: "Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" Some fifty or sixty years ago, a very intelligent Protestant, Sir John Forbes, who was physician to the Queen, published an interesting book under the title of "Memoranda of a Tour in Ireland." Here is one of his Irish notes:—"Among my inquiries as to the religious doctrines of Catholics of the humbler classes in Ireland I did not forget the subject of the Virgin Mary, and I am bound in honesty to state that I never met with one, even the humblest and most ignorant, who did not deny that they worshipped her as they worship God. They said that they venerated her as higher and holier even than saints and angels, but prayed to her only to pray for them."

So is it with all ranks of the pious faithful in all lands. We pray to her who was given to us as a Mother from the Cross; we bless her and praise her, and entreat her to exercise on our behalf the "suppliant omnipotence" of a mother; and the Church which trains her children to speak and feel and act in this manner towards the Mother of Jesus shows by this sign alone that she is the Church which Jesus founded upon earth.

Last Thoughts on the Hail Mary

Last thoughts—for we are coming to the end of our book, and, though we have often in the preceding pages thought of the Archangel's greeting to Our Lady, we shall end with a fuller study of the Hail Mary. That little prayer of predilection is a fitting finale; for it ends with a solemn reference to what is for us the ending of all that can end—the hour of our death. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

"Hail Mary!" Thanks be to Almighty God for the thousands upon thousands of Hail Marys that we have each of us said since our mothers taught us our first Hail Mary long ago. How many more shall we say before our first Hail Mary in heaven? For the Hail Mary will be said in heaven—the first part at least, for the second part, or the concluding words of it, will be obsolete, out of date, as the hour of our death will then be only a memorable epoch in the past. All the rest of the little prayer will still be practical; for the Blessed Virgin will still be praised and blessed by us in heaven, and she will still

pray for us and with us, not indeed the prayer of petition (for there will be nothing more to ask for), but the prayer of praise and thanksgiving which will go on for ever. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners." Yes, even in heaven that word will still be true. One of the strongest motives of our praise and thanksgiving in the life of heaven will be to remember for ever that we are sinners, forgiven sinners, and that God's forgiveness will go on for ever and for ever, as the priest every day implores that it may when he says the prayer *Sacrosanctae et individuae Trinitati* at the end of the Divine Office. *Nobisque remissio omnium peccatorum per infinita saecula saeculorum.* Nor can it be said that that last phrase, "through infinite ages of ages," qualifies only the "praise, honour, power and glory" that are here claimed for God "from every creature," *ab omni creatura.* That *for ever and for ever* certainly refers chiefly to the clause that is nearest to it, especially as the eternity of the divine glory has already been expressed by the epithet *Sempiterna* with which this phrase begins—*Sempiterna laus, honor, virtus, et gloria.* We pray, therefore, now on earth, that God's pardon of all our sins may be renewed for ever; and hereafter in heaven we shall praise and bless God for ever, as sinners still but sinners repentant and forgiven, with the rapture and the

wonder of our final and everlasting forgiveness that can never be forfeited, felt more freshly, more keenly, more vividly, and in a more human and more earthly manner than we are, perhaps, wont to imagine in our poor conceptions of heaven

Father Faber, in one of his "Spiritual Conferences," says: "Things that are done for God should be done very cleanly. They must be shapely as well as vigorous. What a beautiful thing, doubtless, was the Angelus of St. Francis of Sales! There was more in it than in a week of our devotional failures." This might be a help to us to perform certain acts of devotion and other duties well—namely, to think how certain favourite saints, or even certain holy souls on earth, have done or may now be doing these same things. For instance, let us try to make our Angelus something less unlike than it generally has been to the Angelus of St. Francis of Sales.

There are three Hail Marys in the Angelus, one in each of its three divisions, which three divisions can very readily be linked with the Three Divine Persons in order, as is the case with many other similar three-fold divisions. What Father Faber says here about the Angelus may be said about every Hail Mary. There can be such a difference in the way in which it is said. "What is worth doing is worth doing well."

It is a pity not to take out of our various exercises of piety something approaching to the full amount of spiritual profit that they are intended to contain for our souls.

Into these exercises of piety the Hail Mary enters largely, and it is well to remind ourselves of all that this shortest of prayers signifies, in order that habitually we may feel this meaning as it were implicitly, and now and then more or less explicitly. Not that we need be much afraid of a merely mechanical repetition of the Hail Mary. We begin our prayers with the intention of praying, and this makes it all a prayer, even if our mind wanders off against our will, and only the lips go on forming the holy syllables. You remember, perhaps, that old monk who spent all the day at his prayers; and, when someone said to him, "Father, how can you keep your mind fixed on your prayers so many hours?" he answered, "My son, it is a great thing even to keep the lips moving for the love of God." But, no doubt, it would be better to follow and feel the meaning of the prayer.

About this prayer and about every sort of prayer it is true to say that it is a privilege and an honour to be allowed to use it. We are too prone to betake ourselves to prayer reluctantly as to a task, a duty, whereas we ought to seek in it our recreation, our repose. Not alone the prayer

that the poor human creature addresses to his Creator; but what a dignity, how high and holy a thing it is to be allowed to address the Blessed Virgin or one of the saints of God! Oh, we take this privilege too coldly, in too vulgar and commonplace a spirit, with a stupid insensibility. Let us try to realise all that is implied of the unearthly, the supernatural, the divine, in every smallest exercise of faith and piety, and certainly in every Hail Mary devoutly said, with real contrition, faith, hope, and charity.

The Hail Mary is called in some prayer-books the Angelical Salutation, but it is more than the greeting of an angel; for, as the catechism tells us, "the Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth made the first part of it, and the Church made the last." The ambassador sent by the Most High to His lowly Handmaid was instructed to address her thus: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed are thou amongst women." And, when Mary, already Mother of God, went with haste into the mountains of Judea to visit and help her holy cousin the wife of Zachary, Elizabeth repeated these last words of the Archangel and added others of her own: "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." Finally, the Church, after inserting at the beginning and end of this clause the sacred names of Mary and Jesus, completes

the little prayer by this perfect combination of invocation and entreaty, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

Let us now see how far we can go in applying to this Angelical Salutation the second of St. Ignatius's Three Methods of Prayer, dwelling on the separate words and phrases of which it is composed and trying to feel the full force of each.

Ave, Maria. "Hail, Mary." We salute lovingly and reverently the Mother of Jesus, the Queen of Heaven. Think who we are and who she is. Think how the saints felt towards her while they were on earth—St. Bernard and St. Bernardino, St. John Berchmans, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and so many other specially devoted to the Blessed Virgin. And *we* dare to present ourselves before her, to address her, to call her by her name, to claim her attention, to implore her intercession!

"Hail." A brief and beautiful greeting, more convenient in English than the cumbrous *je vous salue* of the French which has besides the disadvantage of confining the salutation to one person, the speaker, whereas "hail" serves equally for one and for many, and one speaking in the name of many or for himself alone can say "Hail, Mary."

Ave. I chance to have remembered for nearly

sixty years a note on this word which occurs somewhere in an old school-book, Anthon's *Sallust.* "Whiter's etymology of this word is extremely ingenious: '*Ave* or *have* is nothing but *habe*, have, possess—riches, honours, health.'" As if these three were the best treasures that a well-wisher could wish for a friend towards whom he sought to express great good-will. People have pretended to find the respective characteristics of the English and French race in their usual greetings.—"How do you do?" and "Comment vous portez-vous?"—as if the sturdy Briton looked to action while the courteous Frenchman attached importance to manner and deportment—so, too, if the import of *Ave* were such as has been suggested, it might seem to suit the temper of the all-conquering Roman, while the corresponding χαῖρε, "rejoice!" might be taken as hinting at the cheerful, pleasure-loving disposition of the Greek.

All these meanings of *Ave*, understood in the highest sense, can be given to our greeting of the Blessed Virgin. We bid her rejoice for ever, as the Church bids her do during Paschal time. *Regina Coeli, laetare.* And again, *gaude et laetare, O Virgo Maria.* "Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary!" "Riches, honours, health." We, in greeting Mary with our *Ave*, wish for her these goods in a transcendent heavenly sense—every-

thing that belongs to her utterly inconceivable share of heaven. "O Queen of Heaven, rejoice!"

Ave, Maria! "Hail Mary!" "And the Virgin's name was Mary" (Luke i. 28). We call her by that name which for her sake has been repeated perpetually in Christian literature and Catholic prayer; which has inspired the most delicate art of the painter, the tenderest eloquence of the preacher, the purest strains of the poet; which has sanctified so many households and has changed so many daughters of Eve into children of Mary. Some nations, like Portugal at one period, have shown their reverence for the name of Mary by not allowing it to be borne by women, while other nations have shown their reverence in the opposite way, making it the favourite name in the highest as well as in the lowest grade of society, common yet never vulgar. Our Irish forefathers showed their reverence for the name of Mary by reserving one form of the name for our Blessed Lady herself and giving another to her daughters. It was, perhaps, the sacred spell of that name that without his knowing it made the poor sinful poet (who had many generous and many Catholic impulses) exclaim, "I have a passion for the name of Mary." And elsewhere he says in all seriousness, whatever the context may be:—

> Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
> Look up to thee and to thy Son above.

A less vigorous poet than Lord Byron, but a more virtuous man, who seemed to have light enough to enter the Church, of which the Hail Mary is almost by itself a sufficient note, but who unhappily remained outside, had nevertheless the grace to write :—

> Ave, Maria! thou whose name
> All but adoring love may claim.*

We may each of us recall for ourselves, but not here, the various meanings assigned to that name of Mary, such as the *Stella Maris* which St. Bernard with passionate love invokes in the famous passage that many of us remember by its often repeated chorus : *Respice stellam, voca Mariam.* " Look up to the Star, call upon Mary."

" Hail, Mary, full of grace." Yes, for this is the force of that perfect participle passive, *κεχαριτώμενη,* as it has been understood in the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopian, Egyptian and Persian versions of the Scriptures as well as by St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, Venerable Bede, St. Bernard, and all Catholic commentators. Full of grace according to her capacity at the various stages of her life ; but that capacity increased inconceivably by her closer union with the Author of Grace which began with the first Hail Mary, and that increased capacity filled to the utmost by continually added stores of

* Rev. John Keble.

grace, so that St. Bonaventure says that, as all rivers flow into the sea, even thus all graces whatsoever that angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins ever possessed, all flowed into the Immaculate Heart of Mary; and some ancient writer plays upon her name, "Congregatio omnium aquarum vocatur Maria, congregatio vero gratiarum omnium Maria." For if the Archangel, using the words that the God of Truth inspired, could call her "full of grace" at the beginning, what was she after the enduring fulfilment of the next word of the *Ave Maria*, *Dominus tecum*. "The Lord is with thee"?

Yes, most holy Mary, the Lord was and is with you, and will be with you for ever. He was with you, after you had spoken your Fiat and the Archangel left you; and then during the happy months of solitude and prayer before His birth and during the distressful, but merit-earning, time of St. Joseph's perplexity. He was with you on the way to Bethlehem and on the first Christmas morning when you first clasped Him in your arms, when you first gazed into His eyes, when you imprinted your first kiss upon His lips. Did He cry like any helpless infant? Yes, He too deigned to be

> An infant crying in the night
> And with no language but a cry.

He was with you when He first pressed His lips against your virginal breast, when you first earned the last part of that beatitude which the woman in the crowd pronounced upon you thirty years after. He was with you during all the years of childhood from the day that the Child first left the shelter of your arms, first stood on the ground alone, first spoke to you an articulate word—was it your name? Was it the sacred name of mother? He was with you for thirty years with the single break of the Three Days' Loss. And even in the three years of His public ministry, with you sometimes in person and always in spirit, as you were with Him. With you on Calvary, and after His death again in your arms on the way to the sepulchre. With you surely first of all in the joy of the Resurrection, and often during the Forty Days before the sorrowful rapture of the Ascension. And then in spirit during the fifteen years of waiting which succeeded His going, like the other fifteen years of your life which had preceded His coming. And then with you and you with Him in the Assumption when you went up out of this desert, leaning on your beloved Son who is now with you in heaven, giving you for all eternity the share of heaven which is due to her who was chosen to be on earth and for ever the true Mother of the coequal and co-

eternal Son of God. *Dominus tecum.* "The Lord is with thee."

I need not go much further in forestalling the reader's application of the second method of prayer to the Hail Mary. Every word of that briefest and most effective of prayers suggests many thoughts and prompts many feelings.

"Blessed art thou amongst women." Blessed and worthy of being blessed and praised above all women that ever have been or ever shall be on this earth. High and holy beyond all the holy women of the Old Testament, beginning with our first mother, whose name *Eva* reversed forms the *Ave* of the Archangel :—

> Sumens illud Ave,
> Mutans Hevae nomen.

What sanctity must our Mother Eve have attained at the end of her long centuries of sorrow and penance and prayer! Yet not she but the Second Eve is the true Mother of all the living. How much better Mary, daughter of Joachim and Anna, deserved the praises that Joachim the High Priest bestowed long before on Judith : "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people." * To Mary Immaculate it was

* Judith xv. 10.

said by the King of kings, as King Assuerus said to Esther: "This law was not made for thee but for all others." And among the women who did not look forward to her but looked back to her, what glorious saints of every kind and degree—Agnes, Teresa, and so many others that we know, and so many that we do not know in the hidden life of holy convents and Christian households. Yet blessed beyond all these together is the Blessed Virgin Mary; for "by their fruits you shall know them," and blessed is the fruit of her womb, Jesus.

Please God, we shall take the advice that someone has given, to put almost everything we do between two Hail Marys. The spirit of the Hail Mary shall be always in our hearts, and the words of it often on our lips through all our days and hours till that last dread hour when, if we are conscious enough, we shall change the last words a little thus: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me a poor sinner now at the hour of my death." Every Hail Mary is a prayer for a happy death: for we pray that the Blessed Virgin may pray for us when we are dying, and the dying one for whom the Mother of God is at that moment praying must die happily. Nothing but a happy death can be the ending of a lifetime of Hail Marys.

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Behold Your Mother!

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